

THE  
CORNHILL MAGAZINE,



VOL. XII.

*The right of publishing Translations of Articles in this Magazine is reserved.]*

THE  
CORNHILL  
MAGAZINE.

VOL. XII.

JULY TO DECEMBER, 1865.

LONDON:  
SMITH, ELDER & CO., 65, CORNHILL.

---

1865.

QUICK COLLECTION.  
TRINITY COLLEGE LIBRARY,  
JUN 1914.

69538



## CONTENTS OF VOLUME XII.

|  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| <b>WIVES AND DAUGHTERS. AN EVERY-DAY STORY.</b>          |      |
| Chapter XXXIII. Brightening Prospects .....              | 1    |
| " XXXIV. A Lover's Mistake .....                         | 7    |
| " XXXV. The Mother's Manceuvre .....                     | 13   |
| " XXXVI. Domestic Diplomacy .....                        | 25   |
| " XXXVII. A Fluke, and What came of it .....             | 129  |
| " XXXVIII. Mr. Kirkpatrick, Q.C. ....                    | 140  |
| " XXXIX. Secret Thoughts Ooze Out .....                  | 148  |
| " XL. Molly Gibson Breathes Freely .....                 | 158  |
| " XLI. Gathering Clouds .....                            | 257  |
| " XLII. The Storm bursts .....                           | 267  |
| " XLIII. Cynthia's Confession .....                      | 274  |
| " XLIV. Molly Gibson to the Rescue .....                 | 281  |
| " XLV. Confidences .....                                 | 289  |
| " XLVI. Hollingford Gossips .....                        | 385  |
| " XLVII. Scandal and its Victims .....                   | 392  |
| " XLVIII. An Innocent Culprit .....                      | 401  |
| " XLIX. Molly Gibson finds a Champion .....              | 408  |
| " L. Cynthia at Bay .....                                | 416  |
| " LI. "Troubles never come Alone" .....                  | 513  |
| " LII. Squire Hamley's Sorrow .....                      | 521  |
| " LIII. Unlooked-for Arrivals .....                      | 530  |
| " LIV. Molly Gibson's Worth is Discovered .....          | 538  |
| " LV. An Absent Lover Returns .....                      | 641  |
| " LVI. "Off with the Old Love, and on with the New" .... | 649  |
| " LVII. Bridal Visits and Adieux .....                   | 655  |
| " LVIII. Reviving Hopes and Brightening Prospects .....  | 663  |
| " LIX. Molly Gibson at Hamley Hall .....                 | 671  |
| <br><b>ARMADALE. By Wilkie Collins.</b>                  |      |
| <i>BOOK THE THIRD—continued.</i>                         |      |
| Chapter X. The Housemaid's Face .....                    | 60   |
| " XI. Miss Gwilt among the Quicksands .....              | 72   |
| " XII. The Clonding of the Sky .....                     | 81   |
| " XIII. Exit .....                                       | 195  |
| <b>BOOK THE FOURTH.</b>                                  |      |
| Chapter I. Mrs. Milroy .....                             | 204  |
| " II. The Man is Found .....                             | 213  |
| " III. The Brink of Discovery .....                      | 333  |
| " IV. Allan at Bay .....                                 | 345  |
| " V. Pedgift's Remedy .....                              | 461  |
| " VI. Pedgift's Postscript .....                         | 471  |
| " VII. The Martyrdom of Miss Gwilt .....                 | 476  |
| " VIII. She Comes between Them .....                     | 576  |
| " IX. She Knows the Truth .....                          | 584  |
| " X. Miss Gwilt's Diary .....                            | 723  |

|   | Page |
|---|------|
| "Acquitted on the Ground of Insanity." (From a "Mad Doctor's" point of view)  | 426  |
| Advocacy, the Profession of .....   | 105  |
| America, the Shoddy Aristocracy of.....                                       | 43   |
| Andrea Ferara.....  | 189  |
| Atlantic Telegraph.....   | 364  |
| Benvenuto Cellini .....   | 318  |
| Charities, Provincial Medical .....   | 555  |
| China, Recollections of Crime and Criminals in .....                          | 235  |
| Costume and Character .....   | 568  |
| Dante .....   | 243  |
| Drama, English, during the Reigns of Elizabeth and James :—                   |      |
| Part III. ....  | 86   |
| Earndale, the Famous Quire of.....  | 99   |
| Election Days in Ireland .....  | 165  |
| Erasmus .....   | 116  |
| Etna in Eruption.....   | 178  |
| Fair of Hurdwar, the Holy .....   | 609  |
| Family of Temple, the .....   | 749  |
| Ferara, Andrea .....  | 189  |
| French Felons .....   | 604  |
| Fords of Jordan, 1859 .....   | 629  |
| Greenwich Hospital .....  | 631  |
| Harvest .....   | 358  |
| Heywood, Recollections of the Life of Joseph, and some of his Thoughts about  |      |
| Music.....  | 689  |
| Holiday in Venice .....   | 441  |
| Homburg, to and back for a Shilling .....                                     | 221  |
| Hurdwar, the Holy Fair of .....   | 609  |
| Ideas, the Platonic Doctrine of.....  | 452  |
| Induction and Deduction .....   | 296  |
| Insanity, "Acquitted on the ground of." (From a "Mad Doctor's" point of view) | 426  |
| Ireland, Old Election Days in .....   | 165  |
| Jordan, the Fords of, 1859 .....  | 629  |
| Keys, a Few Thoughts on .....   | 623  |
| Making Merry .....  | 547  |
| Maori Sketches .....  | 498  |
| Medical Charities, Provincial .....   | 555  |
| Music, Joseph Heywood's Recollections of .....                                | 689  |
| My Persecutors .....  | 396  |

# CONTENTS.

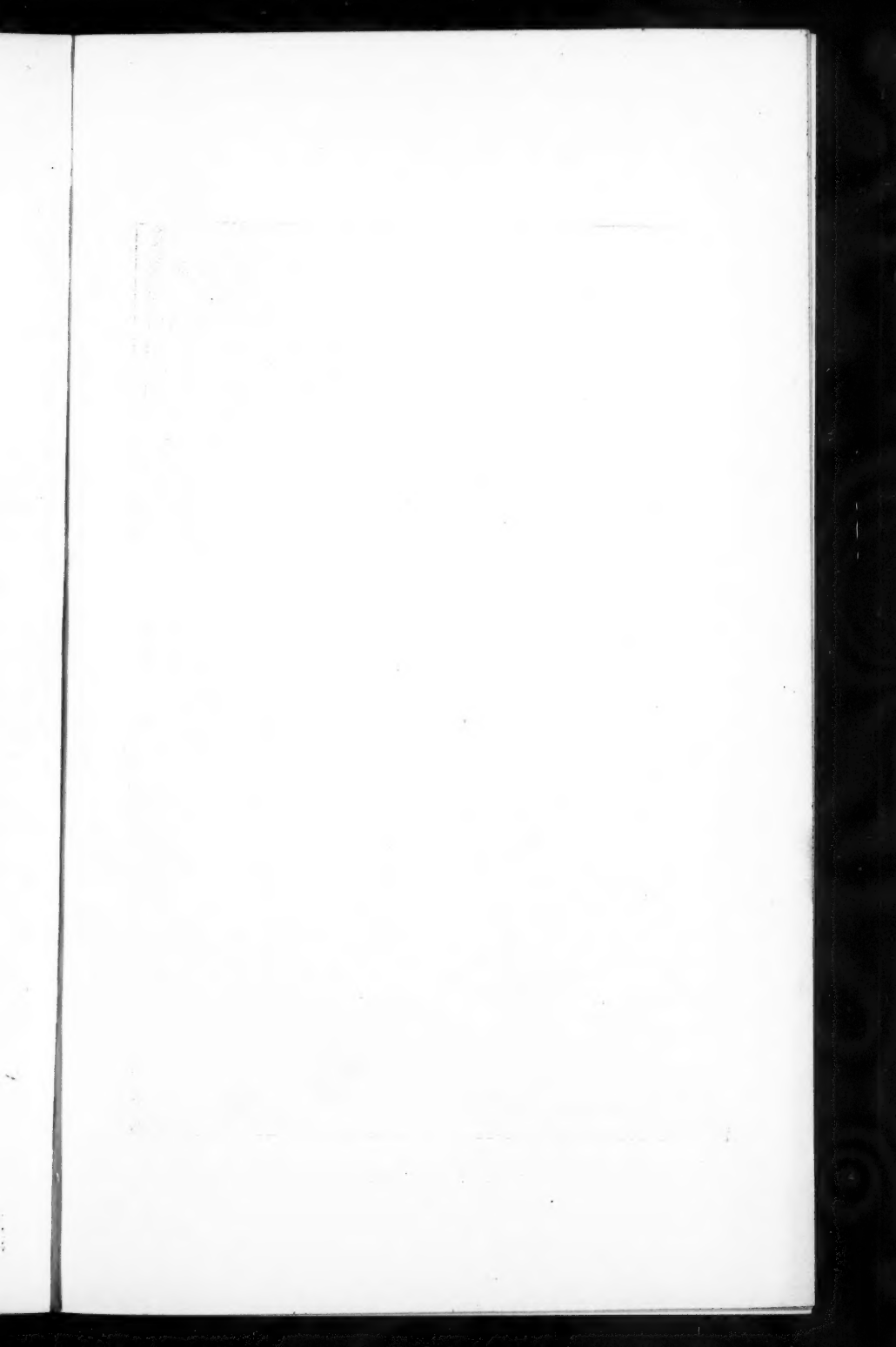
vii

|  | Page |
|--|------|
| Navy, the Social History of the .....  | 374  |
| Old Election Days in Ireland .....   | 165  |
| Old Showman, the .....   | 713  |
| Persecutors, My .....  | 306  |
| Platonic Doctrine of Ideas .....   | 452  |
| Profession of Advocacy.....  | 105  |
| Provincialisms, the Poetry of .....  | 30   |
| Provincial Medical Charities.....  | 555  |
| Quire of Earndale, the Famous.....   | 99   |
| Recollections of Crime and Criminals in China.....   | 235  |
| Recollections of the Life of Joseph Heywood, and some of his Thoughts about<br>Music ..... | 689  |
| Ronda Fair .....   | 679  |
| Shoddy Aristocracy of America .....  | 43   |
| Showman, the Old .....   | 713  |
| Sketches, Maori .....  | 498  |
| Social History of the Navy .....   | 374  |
| 'Telegraph, the Atlantic .....   | 364  |
| Temple, the Family of .....  | 749  |
| Trouville-sur-Mer .....  | 489  |
| Venice, a Holiday in .....   | 441  |

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.



|   | TO FACE PAGE |
|---|--------------|
| "OH! IT IS NO WONDER" .....                           | 1            |
| MISS GWILT .....                                      | 60           |
| "I TRUST THIS WILL NEVER OCCUR AGAIN, CYNTHIA!" ..... | 129          |
| THE TEMPTING MOMENT .....                             | 195          |
| "OH, MOLLY, MOLLY, COME AND JUDGE BETWEEN US!" .....  | 257          |
| PEDGIFT AT FAULT .....                                | 333          |
| LADY HARRIET ASKS ONE OR TWO QUESTIONS .....          | 385          |
| THE MOTH AND THE CANDLE .....                         | 461          |
| "MAMAN, MAMAN!" .....                                 | 513          |
| THANKS TO THE THUNDER .....                           | 576          |
| CYNTHIA'S LAST LOVER .....                            | 641          |
| MISS GWILT AND THE GORGONS .....                      | 723          |





"OH! IT IS NO WONDER!"

# THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

JULY, 1865.

## Wives and Daughters.

AN EVERY-DAY STORY.

### CHAPTER XXXIII.

#### BRIGHTENING PROSPECTS.



IT was a day or two afterwards, that Mr. Gibson made time to ride round by Hamley, desirous to learn more exact particulars of this scheme for Roger than he could obtain from any extraneous source, and rather puzzled to know whether he should interfere in the project or not. The state of the case was this:—Osborne's symptoms were, in Mr. Gibson's opinion, signs of his having a fatal disease. Dr. Nicholls had differed from him on this head, and Mr. Gibson knew that the old physician had had long experience, and was considered very skilful in the profession. Still he believed that he himself was right, and, if so, the complaint was one which might continue for years in the same state as at present, or might end the young man's life in an hour—a minute. Supposing that Mr. Gibson was right, would it be well for Roger to be away where no sudden calls for his presence could reach him—away for two years? Yet if the affair was concluded, the interference of a medical man might accelerate the very evil to be feared; and after all Dr. Nicholls

might be right, and the symptoms might proceed from some other cause. Might? Yes. Probably did? No. Mr. Gibson could not bring himself to say yes to this latter form of sentence. So he rode on, meditating; his reins slack, his head a little bent. It was one of those still and lovely autumn days when the red and yellow leaves are hanging-pegs to dewy, brilliant gossamer-webs; when the hedges are full of trailing brambles, loaded with ripe blackberries; when the air is full of the farewell whistles and pipes of birds, clear and short—not the long full-throated warbles of spring; when the whirr of the partridge's wings is heard in the stubble-fields, as the sharp hoof-blows fall on the paved lanes; when here and there a leaf floats and flutters down to the ground, although there is not a single breath of wind. The country surgeon felt the beauty of the seasons perhaps more than most men. He saw more of it by day, by night, in storm and sunshine, or in the still, soft, cloudy weather. He never spoke about what he felt on the subject; indeed, he did not put his feelings into words, even to himself. But if his mood ever approached to the sentimental, it was on such days as this. He rode into the stable-yard, gave his horse to a man, and went into the house by a side entrance. In the passage he met the squire.

"That's capital, Gibson! what good wind blew you here? You'll have some lunch? it's on the table, I only just this minute left the room." And he kept shaking Mr. Gibson's hand all the time till he had placed him, nothing loth, at the well-covered dining-table.

"What's this I hear about Roger?" said Mr. Gibson, plunging at once into the subject.

"Aha! so you've heard, have you? It's famous, is it not? He's a boy to be proud of, is old Roger. Steady Roger; we used to think him slow, but it seems to me that slow and sure wins the race. But tell me; what have you heard? how much is known? Nay, you must have a glass full. It's old ale, such as we don't brew now-a-days; it's as old as Osborne. We brewed it that autumn, and we called it the young squire's ale. I thought to have tapped it on his marriage, but I don't know when that will come to pass, so we've tapped it now in Roger's honour."

The old squire had evidently been enjoying the young squire's ale to the verge of prudence. It was indeed as he said, "as strong as brandy," and Mr. Gibson had to sip it very carefully as he ate his cold roast beef.

"Well! and what have you heard? There's a deal to hear, and all good news, though I shall miss the lad, I know that."

"I did not know it was settled; I only heard that it was in progress."

"Well, it was only in progress, as you call it, till last Tuesday. He never let me know anything about it, though; he says he thought I might be fidgety with thinking of the pros and cons. So I never knew a word on't till I had a letter from my Lord Hollingford—where is it?" pulling



out a great black leathern receptacle for all manner of papers. And putting on his spectacles, he read aloud their headings.

"'Measurement of timber, new railways,' 'drench for cows, from Farmer Hayes,' 'Dobson's accounts,'—'um 'um—here it is. Now read that letter,'" handing it to Mr. Gibson.

It was a manly, feeling, sensible letter, explaining to the old father in very simple language the services which were demanded by the terms of the will to which he and two or three others were trustees; the liberal allowance for expenses, the still more liberal reward for performance, which had tempted several men of considerable renown to offer themselves as candidates for the appointment. Lord Hollingford then went on to say that, having seen a good deal of Roger lately, since the publication of his article in reply to the French osteologist, he had had reason to think that in him the trustees would find united the various qualities required in a greater measure than in any of the applicants who had at that time presented themselves. Roger had deep interest in the subject; much acquired knowledge, and at the same time, great natural powers of comparison, and classification of facts; he had shown himself to be an observer of a fine and accurate kind, he was of the right age, in the very prime of health and strength, and unshackled by any family ties. Here Mr. Gibson paused for consideration. He hardly cared to ascertain by what steps the result had been arrived at—he already knew what that result was; but his mind was again arrested as his eye caught on the remuneration offered, which was indeed most liberal; and then he read with attention the high praise bestowed on the son in this letter to the father. The squire had been watching Mr. Gibson—waiting till he came to this part—and he rubbed his hands together as he said,—

"Ay! you've come to it at last. It's the best part of the whole, is it not? God bless the boy! and from a Whig, mind you, which makes it the more handsome. And there's more to come still. I say, Gibson, I think my luck is turning at last," passing him on yet another letter to read. "That only came this morning; but I've acted on it already, I sent for the foreman of the drainage works at once, I did; and to-morrow, please God, they'll be at work again."

Mr. Gibson read the second letter, from Roger. To a certain degree it was a modest repetition of what Lord Hollingford had said, with an explanation of how he had come to take so decided a step in life without consulting his father. He did not wish him to be in suspense for one reason. Another was that he felt, as no one else could feel for him, that by accepting this offer, he entered upon the kind of life for which he knew himself to be the most fitted. And then he merged the whole into business. He said that he knew well the suffering his father had gone through when he had to give up his drainage works for want of money; that he, Roger, had been enabled at once to raise money upon the remuneration he was to receive on the accomplishment of his two years' work; and that he had insured his life at once, in order to provide for the repayment of

the money he had raised, in case he did not live to return to England. He said that the sum he had borrowed on this security would at once be forwarded to his father.

Mr. Gibson laid down the letter without speaking a word for some time; then he said,—

“He'll have to pay a pretty sum for insuring his life beyond seas.”

“He has got his Fellowship money,” said the squire, a little depressed at Mr. Gibson's remark.

“Yes; that's true. And he's a strong young fellow, as I know.”

“I wish I could tell his mother,” said the squire in an under-tone.

“It seems all settled now,” said Mr. Gibson, more in reply to his own thoughts than to the squire's remark.

“Yes!” said the squire; “and they're not going to let the grass grow under his feet. He's to be off as soon as he can get his scientific traps ready. I almost wish he wasn't to go. You don't seem quite to like it, doctor?”

“Yes I do,” said Mr. Gibson in a more cheerful tone than before. “It can't be helped now without doing a mischief,” thought he to himself. “Why, squire, I think it a great honour to have such a son. I envy you, that's what I do. Here's a lad of three or four and twenty distinguishing himself in more ways than one, and as simple and affectionate at home as any fellow need to be—not a bit set up.”

“Ay, ay; he's twice as much a son to me as Osborne, who has been all his life set up on nothing at all, as one may say.”

“Come, squire, I must not hear anything against Osborne; we may praise one, without hitting at the other. Osborne has not had the strong health which has enabled Roger to work as he has done. I met a man who knew his tutor at Trinity the other day, and of course we began cracking about Roger—it's not every day that one can reckon a senior wrangler amongst one's friends, and I'm nearly as proud of the lad as you are. This Mr. Mason told me the tutor said that only half of Roger's success was owing to his mental powers; the other half was owing to his perfect health, which enabled him to work harder and more continuously than most men without suffering. He said that in all his experience he had never known any one with an equal capacity for mental labour; and that he could come again with a fresh appetite to his studies after shorter intervals of rest than most. Now I, being a doctor, trace a good deal of his superiority to the material cause of a thoroughly good constitution, which Osborne has not got.”

“Osborne might have if he got out o' doors more,” said the squire, moodily; “but except when he can loaf into Hollingford he does not care to go out at all. I hope,” he continued, with a glance of sudden suspicion at Mr. Gibson, “he's not after one of your girls? I don't mean any offence, you know; but he'll have the estate, and it won't be free, and he must marry money. I don't think I could allow it in Roger; but Osborne is the eldest son, you know.”

Mr. Gibson reddened ; he was offended for a moment. Then the partial truth of what the squire said was presented to his mind, and he remembered their old friendship, so he spoke quietly, if shortly.

"I don't believe there's anything of the kind going on. I'm not much at home you know; but I've never heard or seen anything that should make me suppose that there is. When I do, I'll let you know."

"Now, Gibson, don't go and be offended. I am glad for the boys to have a pleasant house to go to, and I thank you and Mrs. Gibson for making it pleasant. Only keep off love; it can come to no good. That's all. I don't believe Osborne will ever earn a farthing to keep a wife during my life, and if I were to die to-morrow, she would have to bring some money to clear the estate. And if I do speak as I should not have done formerly—a little sharp or so—why, it's because I've been worried by many a care no one knows anything of."

"I'm not going to take offence," said Mr. Gibson, "but let us understand each other clearly. If you don't want your sons to come as much to my house as they do, tell them so yourself. I like the lads, and am glad to see them; but if they do come, you must take the consequences, whatever they are, and not blame me, or them either, for what may happen from the frequent intercourse between two young men and two young women; and what is more, though, as I said, I see nothing whatever of the kind you fear at present, and have promised to tell you of the first symptoms I do see, yet farther than that I won't go. If there is an attachment at any future time, I won't interfere."

"I should not so much mind if Roger fell in love with your Molly. He can fight for himself, you see, and she's an uncommon nice girl. My poor wife was so fond of her," answered the squire. "It's Osborne and the estate I'm thinking of!"

"Well, then, tell him not to come near us. I shall be sorry, but you will be safe."

"I'll think about it; but he's difficult to manage. I've always to get my blood well up before I can speak my mind to him."

Mr. Gibson was leaving the room, but at these words he turned and laid his hand on the squire's arm.

"Take my advice, squire. As I said, there is no harm done as yet, as far as I know. Prevention is better than cure. Speak out, but speak gently to Osborne, and do it at once. I shall understand how it is if he does not show his face for some months in my house. If you speak gently to him, he'll take the advice as from a friend. If he can assure you there's no danger, of course he'll come just as usual, when he likes."

It was all very fine giving the squire this good advice; but as Osborne had already formed the very kind of marriage his father most deprecated, it did not act quite as well as Mr. Gibson had hoped. The squire began the conversation with unusual self-control; but he grew irritated when Osborne denied his father's right to interfere in any marriage he might

contemplate; denied it with a certain degree of doggedness and weariness of the subject that drove the squire into one of his passions; and although on after reflection he remembered that he had his son's promise and solemn word not to think of either Cynthia or Molly for his wife, yet the father and son had passed through one of those altercations which help to estrange men for life. Each had said bitter things to the other; and, if the brotherly affection had not been so true between Osborne and Roger, they too might have become alienated, in consequence of the squire's exaggerated and injudicious comparison of their characters and deeds. But as Roger in his boyhood had loved Osborne too well to be jealous of the praise and love the eldest son, the beautiful brilliant lad, had received, to the disparagement of his own plain awkwardness and slowness, so now Osborne strove against any feeling of envy or jealousy with all his might; but his efforts were conscious, Roger's had been the simple consequence of affection, and the end to poor Osborne was that he became moody and depressed in mind and body; but both father and son concealed their feelings in Roger's presence. When he came home just before sailing, busy and happy, the squire caught his infectious energy, and Osborne looked up and was cheerful.

There was no time to be lost. He was bound to a hot climate, and must take all advantage possible of the winter months. He was to go first to Paris, to have interviews with some of the scientific men there. Some of his outfit, instruments, &c. were to follow him to Havre, from which port he was to embark, after transacting his business in Paris. The squire learnt all his arrangements and plans, and even tried in after-dinner conversations to penetrate into the questions involved in the researches his son was about to make. But Roger's visit home could not be prolonged beyond two days.

The last day he rode into Hollingford earlier than he needed to have done to catch the London coach, in order to bid the Gibsons good-by. He had been too actively busy for some time to have leisure to bestow much thought on Cynthia; but there was no need for fresh meditation on that subject. Her image as a prize to be worked for, to be served for seven years, and seven years more, was safe and sacred in his heart. It was very bad, this going away, and wishing her good-by for two long years; and he wondered much during his ride how far he should be justified in telling her mother, perhaps in telling her own sweet self, what his feelings were without expecting, nay, indeed reprobating, any answer on her part. Then she would know at any rate how dearly she was beloved by one who was absent; how in all difficulties or dangers the thought of her would be a polar star, high up in the heavens, and so on, and so on; for with all a lover's quickness of imagination and triteness of fancy, he called her a star, a flower, a nymph, a witch, an angel, or a mermaid, a nightingale, a siren, as one or another of her attributes rose up before him.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

## A LOVER'S MISTAKE.

It was afternoon. Molly had gone out for a walk. Mrs. Gibson had been paying some calls. Lazy Cynthia had declined accompanying either. A daily walk was not a necessity to her as it was to Molly. On a lovely day, or with an agreeable object, or when the fancy took her, she could go as far as any one; but these were exceptional cases; in general, she was not disposed to disturb herself from her in-door occupations. Indeed, not one of the ladies would have left the house, had they been aware that Roger was in the neighbourhood; for they were aware that he was to come down but once before his departure, and that his stay at home then would be but for a short time, and they were all anxious to wish him good-by before his long absence. But they had understood that he was not coming to the Hall until the following week, and therefore they had felt themselves at full liberty this afternoon to follow their own devices.

Molly chose a walk that had been a favourite with her ever since she was a child. Something or other had happened just before she left home that made her begin wondering how far it was right for the sake of domestic peace to pass over without comment the little deviations from right that people perceive in those whom they live with. Or, whether, as they are placed in families for distinct purposes, not by chance merely, there are not duties involved in this aspect of their lot in life,—whether by continually passing over failings, their own standard is not lowered,—the practical application of these thoughts being a dismal sort of perplexity on Molly's part as to whether her father was quite aware of her step-mother's perpetual lapses from truth; and whether his blindness was wilful or not. Then she felt bitterly enough that although she was sure as could be that there was no real estrangement between her and her father, yet that there were perpetual obstacles thrown in the way of their intercourse; and she thought with a sigh that if he would but come in with authority, he might cut his way clear to the old intimacy with his daughter, and that they might have all the former walks and talks, and quips and cranks, and glimpses of real confidence once again; things that her stepmother did not value, yet which she, like the dog in the manger, prevented Molly enjoying. But after all Molly was a girl, not so far removed from childhood; and in the middle of her grave regrets and perplexities her eye was caught by the sight of some fine ripe blackberries flourishing away high up on the hedge-bank among scarlet hips and green and russet leaves. She did not care much for blackberries herself; but she had heard Cynthia say that she liked them; and besides there was the charm of scrambling and gathering them, so she forgot all about her troubles, and went climbing up the banks, and clutching at her almost inaccessible prizes, and slipping down again triumphant, to carry them back to the large leaf which was to serve her as a basket.

One or two of them she tasted, but they were as vapid to her palate as ever. The skirt of her pretty print gown was torn out of the gathers, and even with the fruit she had eaten "her pretty lips with blackberries were all besmeared and dyed," when, having gathered as many and more than she could possibly carry, she set off home, hoping to escape into her room and mend her gown before it had offended Mrs. Gibson's neat eye. The front door was easily opened from the outside, and Molly was out of the clear light of the open air and in the shadow of the hall; she saw a face peep out of the dining-room before she quite recognized who it was; and then Mrs. Gibson came softly out, sufficiently at least to beckon her into the room. When Molly had entered Mrs. Gibson closed the door. Poor Molly expected a reprimand for her torn gown and untidy appearance, but was soon relieved by the expression of Mrs. Gibson's face—mysterious and radiant.

"I have been watching for you, dear. Don't go upstairs into the drawing-room, love. It might be a little interruption just now. Roger Hamley is there with Cynthia; and I've reason to think, in fact I did open the door unawares, but I shut it again softly, and I don't think they heard me. Is not it charming? Young love, you know, ah, how sweet it is!"

"Do you mean that Roger has proposed to Cynthia?" asked Molly.

"Not exactly that. But I don't know; of course I know nothing. Only I did hear him say that he had meant to leave England without speaking of his love, but that the temptation of seeing her alone had been too great for him. It was symptomatic, was it not, my dear? And all I wanted was to let it come to a crisis without interruption. So I've been watching for you to prevent your going in and disturbing them."

"But I may go to my own room, mayn't I," pleaded Molly.

"Of course," said Mrs. Gibson, a little testily. "Only I had expected sympathy from you at such an interesting moment."

But Molly did not hear these last words. She had escaped upstairs, and had shut her door. Instinctively she had carried her leaf full of blackberries—what would blackberries be to Cynthia now? She felt as if she could not understand it all; but as for that matter, what could she understand? Nothing. For a few minutes her brain seemed in too great a whirl to comprehend anything but that she was being carried on in earth's diurnal course, with rocks, and stones, and trees, with as little volition on her part as if she were dead. Then the room grew stifling, and instinctively she went to the open casement window, and leant out, gasping for breath. Gradually the consciousness of the soft peaceful landscape stole into her mind, and stilled the buzzing confusion. There, bathed in the almost level rays of the autumn sunlight, lay the landscape she had known and loved from childhood; as quiet, as full of low humming life as it had been at this hour for many generations. The autumn flowers blazed out in the garden below, the lazy cows were in the meadow beyond, chewing their cud in the green aftermath; the evening fires had just been

made up in the cottages beyond, in preparation for the husband's home-coming, and were sending up soft curls of blue smoke into the still air; the children, let loose from school, were shouting merrily in the distance, and she—Just then she heard nearer sounds; an opened door, steps on the lower flight of stairs. He could not have gone without even seeing her. He never, never would have done so cruel a thing—never would have forgotten poor little Molly, however happy he might be. No! there were steps and voices, and the drawing-room door was opened and shut once more. She laid down her head on her arms that rested on the window-sill, and cried,—she had been so distrustful as to have let the idea enter her mind that he could go without wishing her good-by; her, whom his mother had so loved, and called by the name of his little dead sister. And as she thought of the tender love Mrs. Hamley had borne her she cried the more, for the vanishing of such love for her off the face of the earth. Suddenly the drawing-room door opened, and some one was heard coming upstairs; it was Cynthia's step. Molly hastily wiped her eyes, and stood up and tried to look unconcerned; it was all she had time to do before Cynthia, after a little pause at the closed door, had knocked; and on an answer being given, had said, without opening the door,—“Molly! Mr. Roger Hamley is here, and wants to wish you good-by before he goes.” Then she went downstairs again, as if anxious just at that moment to avoid even so short a tête-à-tête with Molly. With a gulp and a fit of resolution, as a child makes up its mind to swallow a nauseous dose of medicine, Molly went instantly downstairs.

Roger was talking earnestly to Mrs. Gibson in the bay of the window when Molly entered; Cynthia was standing near, listening, but taking no part in the conversation. Her eyes were downcast, and she did not look up as Molly drew shyly near.

Roger was saying,—“I could never forgive myself if I had accepted a pledge from her. She shall be free until my return; but the hope, the words, her sweet goodness, have made me happy beyond description. Oh, Molly!” suddenly becoming aware of her presence, and turning to her, and taking her hand in both of his,—“I think you have long guessed my secret, have you not? I once thought of speaking to you before I left, and confiding it all to you. But the temptation has been too great, I have told Cynthia how fondly I love her, as far as words can tell; and she says—” then he looked at Cynthia with passionate delight and seemed to forget in that gaze that he had left his sentence to Molly half finished.

Cynthia did not seem inclined to repeat her saying, whatever it was, but her mother spoke for her.

“My dear sweet girl values your love as it ought to be valued, I am sure. And I believe,” looking at Cynthia and Roger with intelligent archness, “I could tell tales as to the cause of her indisposition in the spring.”

“Mother,” said Cynthia suddenly, “you know it was no such thing. Pray don't invent stories about me, I have engaged myself to Mr. Roger Hamley, and that is enough.”



"Enough! more than enough!" said Roger. "I will not accept your pledge. I am bound, but you are free. I like to feel bound, it makes me happy and at peace, but with all the chances involved in the next two years, you must not shackle yourself by promises."

Cynthia did not speak at once; she was evidently revolving something in her own mind. Mrs. Gibson took up the word.

"You are very generous, I am sure. Perhaps it will be better not to mention it."

"I would much rather have it kept a secret," said Cynthia, interrupting.

"Certainly, my dear love. That was just what I was going to say. I once knew a young lady who heard of the death of a young man in America, whom she had known pretty well; and she immediately said she had been engaged to him, and even went so far as to put on weeds; and it was a false report, for he came back well and merry, and declared to everybody he had never so much as thought about her. So it was very awkward for her. These things had much better be kept secret until the proper time has come for divulging them."

Even then and there Cynthia could not resist the temptation of saying,—*"Mamma, I will promise you I won't put on weeds, whatever reports come of Mr. Roger Hamley."*

"Roger, please!" he put in, in a tender whisper.

"And you will all be witnesses that he has professed to think of me, if he is tempted afterwards to deny the fact. But at the same time I wish it to be kept a secret until his return—and I am sure you will all be so kind as to attend to my wish. Please, *Roger!* Please, *Molly!* *Mamma!* I must especially beg it of you!"

Roger would have granted anything when she asked him by that name, and in that tone. He took her hand in silent pledge of his reply. Molly felt as if she could never bring herself to name the affair as a common piece of news. So it was only Mrs. Gibson answered aloud,—

"My dear child! why 'especially' to poor me? You know I'm the most trustworthy person alive!"

The little pendule on the chimney-piece struck the half-hour.

"I must go!" said Roger, in dismay. "I had no idea it was so late. I shall write from Paris. The coach will be at the George by this time, and will only stay five minutes. Dearest Cynthia—" he took her hand, and then, as if the temptation was irresistible, he drew her to him and kissed her. "Only remember you are free!" said he, as he released her and passed on to Mrs. Gibson.

"If I had considered myself free," said Cynthia, blushing a little, but ready with her repartee to the last,—*"if I had thought myself free, do you think I would have allowed that?"*

Then Molly's turn came; and the old brotherly tenderness came back into his look, his voice, his bearing.

"Molly! you won't forget me, I know; I shall never forget you, nor



your goodness to—her.” His voice began to quiver, and it was best to be gone. Mrs. Gibson was pouring out, unheard and unheeded, words of farewell; Cynthia was re-arranging some flowers in a vase on the table, the defects in which had caught her artistic eye, without the consciousness penetrating to her mind. Molly stood, numb to the heart; neither glad nor sorry, nor anything but stunned. She felt the slackened touch of the warm grasping hand; she looked up—for till now her eyes had been down-cast, as if there were heavy weights to their lids—and the place was empty where he had been; his quick step was heard on the stair, the front door was opened and shut; and then as quick as lightning Molly ran up to the front attic—the lumber-room, whose window commanded the street down which he must pass. The window-clasp was unused and stiff, Molly tugged at it—unless it was open, and her head put out, that last chance would be gone.

“I must see him again; I must! I must!” she wailed out, as she was pulling. There he was, running hard to catch the London coach; his luggage had been left at the George before he came up to wish the Gibsons good-by. In all his hurry, Molly saw him turn round and shade his eyes from the level rays of the westering sun, and rake the house with his glances—in hopes, she knew, of catching one more glimpse of Cynthia. But apparently he saw no one, not even Molly at the attic casement; for she had drawn back when he had turned, and kept herself in shadow; for she had no right to put herself forward as the one to watch and yearn for farewell signs. None came—another moment—he was out of sight for years.

She shut the window softly, and shivered all over. She left the attic and went to her own room; but she did not begin to take off her out-of-door things till she heard Cynthia's foot on the stairs. Then she hastily went to the toilet-table, and began to untie her bonnet-strings; but they were in a knot, and took time to undo. Cynthia's step stopped at Molly's door; she opened it a little and said,—“May I come in, Molly?”

“Certainly,” said Molly, longing to be able to say “No” all the time. Molly did not turn to meet her, so Cynthia came up behind her, and putting her two hands round Molly's waist, peeped over her shoulder, putting out her lips to be kissed. Molly could not resist the action—the mute entreaty for a caress. But in the moment before she had caught reflections of the two faces in the glass; her own, red-eyed, pale, with lips dyed with blackberry juice, her curls tangled, her bonnet pulled awry, her gown torn—and contrasted it with Cynthia's brightness and bloom, and the trim elegance of her dress. “Oh! it is no wonder!” thought poor Molly, as she turned round, and put her arms round Cynthia, and laid her head for an instant on her shoulder—the weary, aching head that sought a loving pillow in that supreme moment! The next she had raised herself, and had taken Cynthia's two hands, and was holding her off a little, the better to read her face.

“Cynthia! you do love him dearly, don't you?”

Cynthia winced a little aside from the penetrating steadiness of those eyes.

"You speak with all the solemnity of an adjuration, Molly!" said she, laughing a little at first to cover her nervousness, and then looking up at Molly. "Don't you think I have given a proof of it? But you know I've often told you I've not the gift of loving; I said pretty much the same thing to him. I can respect, and I fancy I can admire, and I can like, but I never feel carried off my feet by love for any one, not even for you, little Molly, and I am sure I love you more than——"

"No, don't!" said Molly, putting her hand before Cynthia's mouth, in almost a passion of impatience. "Don't, don't—I won't hear you—I ought not to have asked you—it makes you tell lies!"

"Why, Molly!" said Cynthia, in her turn seeking to read Molly's face, "what's the matter with you? One might think you cared for him yourself."

"I?" said Molly, all the blood rushing to her heart suddenly; then it returned, and she had courage to speak, and she spoke the truth as she believed it, though not the real actual truth.

"I do care for him; I think you have won the love of a prince amongst men. Why, I am proud to remember that he has been to me as a brother, and I love him as a sister, and I love you doubly because he has honoured you with his love."

"Come, that's not complimentary!" said Cynthia, laughing, but not ill-pleased to hear her lover's praises, and even willing to depreciate him a little in order to hear more.

"He's well enough, I daresay, and a great deal too learned and clever for a stupid girl like me; but even you must acknowledge he is very plain and awkward; and I like pretty things and pretty people."

"Cynthia, I won't talk to you about him. You know you don't mean what you are saying, and you only say it out of contradiction, because I praise him. He shan't be run down by you, even in joke."

"Well, then, we won't talk of him at all. I was so surprised when he began to speak—so——" and Cynthia looked very lovely, blushing and dimpling up as she remembered his words and looks. Suddenly she recalled herself to the present time, and her eye caught on the leaf full of blackberries—the broad green leaf, so fresh and crisp when Molly had gathered it an hour or so ago, but now soft and flabby, and dying. Molly saw it, too, and felt a strange kind of sympathetic pity for the poor inanimate leaf.

"Oh! what blackberries! you've gathered them for me, I know!" said Cynthia, sitting down and beginning to feed herself daintily, touching them lightly with the ends of her taper fingers, and dropping each ripe berry into her open mouth. When she had eaten about half she stopped suddenly short.

"How I should like to have gone as far as Paris with him," she exclaimed. "I suppose it would not have been proper; but how pleasant

it would have been. I remember at Boulogne" (another blackberry) "how I used to envy the English who were going to Paris; it seemed to me then as if nobody stopped at Boulogne, but dull, stupid school-girls."

"When will he be there?" asked Molly.

"On Wednesday, he said. I'm to write to him there; at any rate he is going to write to me."

Molly went about the adjustment of her dress in a quiet, business-like manner, not speaking much; Cynthia, although sitting still, seemed very restless. Oh! how much Molly wished that she would go.

"Perhaps, after all," said Cynthia, after a pause of apparent meditation, "we shall never be married."

"Why do you say that?" said Molly, almost bitterly. "You have nothing to make you think so. I wonder how you can bear to think you won't, even for a moment."

"Oh!" said Cynthia; "you must not go and take me *au grand sérieux*. I daresay I don't mean what I say, but you see everything seems a dream at present. Still, I think the chances are equal—the chances for and against our marriage, I mean. Two years! it's a long time; he may change his mind, or I may; or some one else may turn up, and I may get engaged to him: what should you think of that, Molly? I'm putting such a gloomy thing as death quite on one side, you see; yet in two years how much may happen."

"Don't talk so, Cynthia, please don't," said Molly, piteously. "One would think you did not care for him, and he cares so much for you!"

"Why, did I say I did not care for him! I was only calculating chances. I am sure I hope nothing will happen to prevent the marriage. Only, you know it may, and I thought I was taking a step in wisdom, in looking forward to all the evils that might befall. I am sure all the wise people I have ever known thought it a virtue to have gloomy prognostics of the future. But you're not in a mood for wisdom or virtue, I see; so I'll go and get ready for dinner, and leave you to your vanities of dress."

She took Molly's face in both her hands, before Molly was aware of her intention, and kissed it playfully. Then she left Molly to herself.

---

#### CHAPTER XXXV.

##### THE MOTHER'S MANŒUVRE.

MR. GIBSON was not at home at dinner—detained by some patient, most probably. This was not an unusual occurrence; but it was rather an unusual occurrence for Mrs. Gibson to go down into the dining-room, and sit with him as he ate his deferred meal when he came in an hour or two later. In general, she preferred her easy-chair, or her corner of the sofa, upstairs in the drawing-room, though it was very rarely that she would allow Molly to avail herself of her stepmother's neglected privilege. Molly would fain have gone down and kept her father company every

night that he had these solitary meals; but for peace and quietness she gave up her own wishes on the subject.

Mrs. Gibson took a seat by the fire in the dining-room, and patiently waited for the auspicious moment when Mr. Gibson, having satisfied his healthy appetite, turned from the table, and took his place by her side. She got up, and with unaccustomed attention she moved the wine and glasses so that he could help himself without moving from his chair.

"There, now! are you comfortable? for I have a great piece of news to tell you!" said she, when all was arranged.

"I thought there was something on hand," said he, smiling. "Now for it!"

"Roger Hamley has been here this afternoon to bid us good-by."

"Good-by! Is he gone? I did not know he was going so soon!" exclaimed Mr. Gibson.

"Yes: never mind, that's not it."

"But tell me; has he left this neighbourhood? I wanted to have seen him."

"Yes, yes. He left love and regret, and all that sort of thing for you. Now let me get on with my story: he found Cynthia alone, proposed to her, and was accepted."

"Cynthia? Roger proposed to her, and she accepted him?" repeated Mr. Gibson, slowly.

"Yes, to be sure. Why not? you speak as if it was something so very surprising."

"Did I? But I am surprised. He is a very fine young fellow, and I wish Cynthia joy; but do you like it? It will have to be a very long engagement."

"Perhaps," said she, in a knowing manner.

"At any rate he will be away for two years," said Mr. Gibson.

"A great deal may happen in two years," she replied.

"Yes! he will have to run many risks, and go into many dangers, and will come back no nearer to the power of maintaining a wife than when he went out."

"I don't know that," she replied, still in the arch manner of one possessing superior knowledge. "A little bird did tell me that Osborne's life is not so very secure; and then—what will Roger be? Heir to the estate."

"Who told you that about Osborne?" said he, facing round upon her, and frightening her with his sudden sternness of voice and manner. It seemed as if absolute fire came out of his long dark sombre eyes. "Who told you, I say?"

She made a faint rally back into her former playfulness.

"Why? can you deny it? Is it not the truth?"

"I ask you again, Hyacinth, who told you that Osborne Hamley's life is in more danger than mine—or yours?"

"Oh, don't speak in that frightening way. My life is not in danger, I'm sure; nor yours either, love, I hope."

He gave an impatient movement, and threw a wine-glass off the table. For the moment she felt grateful for the diversion, and busied herself in picking up the fragments: "bits of glass were so dangerous," she said. But she was startled by a voice of command, such as she had never yet heard from her husband.

"Never mind the glass. I ask you again, Hyacinth, who told you anything about Osborne Hamley's state of health?"

"I am sure I wish no harm to him, and I daresay he is in very good health, as you say," whispered she, at last.

"Who told——?" began he again, sterner than ever.

"Well, if you will know, and will make such a fuss about it," said she, driven to extremity, "it was you yourself—you or Dr. Nicholls, I am sure I forget which."

"I never spoke to you on the subject, and I don't believe Nicholls did. You had better tell me at once what you are alluding to, for I'm resolved I'll have it out before we leave this room."

"I wish I'd never married again," she said, now fairly crying, and looking round the room, as if in vain search for a mouse-hole in which to hide herself. Then, as if the sight of the door into the store-room gave her courage, she turned and faced him.

"You should not talk your medical secrets so loud then, if you don't want people to hear them. I had to go into the store-room that day Dr. Nicholls was here; cook wanted a jar of preserve, and stopped me just as I was going out—I am sure it was for no pleasure of mine, for I was sadly afraid of sticking my gloves—it was all that you might have a comfortable dinner."

She looked as if she was going to cry again, but he gravely motioned her to go on, merely saying,—

"Well! you overheard our conversation, I suppose?"

"Not much," she answered, eagerly, almost relieved by being thus helped out in her forced confession. "Only a sentence or two."

"What were they?" he asked.

"Why, you had just been saying something, and Dr. Nicholls said: 'If he has got aneurism of the aorta his days are numbered.'"

"Well. Anything more?"

"Yes; you said, 'I hope to God I may be mistaken; but there is a pretty clear indication of symptoms, in my opinion.'"

"How do you know we were speaking of Osborne Hamley?" he asked; perhaps in hopes of throwing her off the scent. But as soon as she perceived that he was descending to her level of subterfuge, she took courage, and said in quite a different tone to the cowed one which she had been using,

"Oh! I know. I heard his name mentioned by you both before I began to listen."

"Then you own you did listen?"

"Yes," said she, hesitating a little now.

"And pray how do you come to remember so exactly the name of the disease spoken of?"

"Because I went—now don't be angry, I really can't see any harm in what I did."

"There, don't deprecate anger. You went——"

"Into the surgery, and looked it out. Why might not I?"

Mr. Gibson did not answer—did not look at her. His face was very pale, and both forehead and lips were contracted. At length he roused himself, sighed, and said,—

"Well! I suppose as one brews one must bake?"

"I don't understand what you mean," pouted she.

"Perhaps not," he replied. "I suppose that it was what you heard on that occasion that made you change your behaviour to Roger Hamley? I have noticed how much more civil you were to him of late."

"If you mean that I have ever got to like him as much as Osborne, you are very much mistaken; no, not even though he has offered to Cynthia, and is to be my son-in-law."

"Let me know the whole affair. You overheard,—I will own that it was Osborne about whom we were speaking, though I shall have something to say about that presently—and then, if I understand you rightly, you changed your behaviour to Roger, and made him more welcome to this house than you had ever done before, regarding him as proximate heir to the Hamley estates?"

"I don't know what you mean by 'proximate.'"

"Go into the surgery, and look into the dictionary then," said he, losing his temper for the first time during the conversation.

"I knew," said she through sobs and tears, "that Roger had taken a fancy to Cynthia; any one might see that; and as long as Roger was only a younger son, with no profession, and nothing but his Fellowship, I thought it right to discourage him, as any one would who had a grain of common sense in them; for a clumsier, more common, awkward, stupid fellow I never saw—to be called county, I mean."

"Take care; you'll have to eat your words presently when you come to fancy he'll have Hamley some day."

"No, I shan't," said she, not perceiving his exact drift. "You are vexed now because it is not Molly he's in love with; and I call it very unjust and unfair to my poor fatherless girl. I am sure I have always tried to further Molly's interests as if she was my own daughter."

Mr. Gibson was too indifferent to this accusation to take any notice of it. He returned to what was of far more importance to him.

"The point I want to be clear about is this. Did you or did you not alter your behaviour to Roger in consequence of what you overheard of my professional conversation with Dr. Nicholls? Have you not favoured his suit to Cynthia since then, on the understanding gathered from that conversation that he stood a good chance of inheriting Hamley?"

"I suppose I did," said she, sulkily. "And if I did, I can't see any

harm in it, that I should be questioned as if I were in a witness-box. He was in love with Cynthia long before that conversation, and she liked him so much. It was not for me to cross the path of true love. I don't see how you would have a mother love her child if she may not turn accidental circumstances to her advantage. Perhaps Cynthia might have died if she had been crossed in love; her poor father was consumptive."

"Don't you know that all professional conversations are confidential? That it would be the most dishonourable thing possible for me to betray secrets which I learn in the exercise of my profession?"

"Yes, of course, you."

"Well! and are not you and I one in all these respects? You cannot do a dishonourable act without my being inculpated in the disgrace. If it would be a deep disgrace for me to betray a professional secret, what would it be for me to trade on that knowledge?"

He was trying hard to be patient; but the offence was of that class which galled him insupportably.

"I don't know what you mean by trading. Trading in a daughter's affections is the last thing I should do; and I should have thought you would be rather glad than otherwise to get Cynthia well married, and off your hands."

Mr. Gibson got up, and walked about the room, his hands in his pockets. Once or twice he began to speak, but he stopped impatiently short without going on.

"I don't know what to say to you," he said at length. "You either can't or won't see what I mean. I am glad enough to have Cynthia here. I have given her a true welcome, and I sincerely hope she will find this house as much a home as my own daughter does. But for the future I must look out of my doors, and double-lock the approaches if I am so foolish as to— However, that's past and gone; and it remains with me to prevent its recurrence as far as I can for the future. Now let us hear the present state of affairs."

"I don't think I ought to tell you anything about it. It is a secret, just as much as your mysteries are."

"Very well; you have told me enough for me to act upon, which I most certainly shall do. It was only the other day I promised the squire to let him know if I suspected anything—any love affair, or entanglement, much less an engagement, between either of his sons and our girls."

"But this is not an engagement; he would not let it be so; if you would only listen to me, I could tell you all. Only I do hope you won't go and tell the squire and everybody. Cynthia did so beg that it might not be known. It is only my unfortunate frankness has led me into this scrape. I never could keep a secret from those whom I love."

"I must tell the squire. I shall not mention it to any one else. And do you quite think it was consistent with your general frankness to have overheard what you did, and never to have mentioned it to me? I could have told you then that Dr. Nicholls' opinion was decidedly



opposed to mine, and that he believed that the disturbance about which I consulted him on Osborne's behalf was merely temporary. Dr. Nicholls would tell you that Osborne is as likely as any man to live and marry and beget children."

If there was any skill used by Mr. Gibson so to word this speech as to conceal his own opinion, Mrs. Gibson was not sharp enough to find it out. She was dismayed, and Mr. Gibson enjoyed her dismay; it restored him to something like his usual frame of mind.

"Let us review this misfortune, for I see you consider it as such," said he.

"No, not quite a misfortune," said she. "But certainly if I had known Dr. Nicholls' opinion——" she hesitated.

"You see the advantage of always consulting me," he continued gravely. "Here is Cynthia engaged——"

"Not engaged, I told you before. He would not allow it to be considered an engagement on her part."

"Well, entangled in a love affair with a lad of three-and-twenty, with nothing beyond his fellowship and a chance of inheriting an encumbered estate; no profession even, abroad for two years, and I must go and tell his father all about it to-morrow."

"O dear, pray say that, if he dislikes it, he has only to express his opinion."

"I don't think you can act without Cynthia in the affair. And if I am not mistaken, Cynthia will have a pretty stout will of her own on the subject."

"Oh, I don't think she cares for him very much; she is not one to be always falling in love, and she does not take things very deeply to heart. But of course one would not do anything abruptly; two years' absence gives one plenty of time to turn oneself in."

"But a little while ago we were threatened with consumption and an early death if Cynthia's affections were thwarted."

"Oh, you dear creature, how you remember all my silly words! It might be; you know poor dear Mr. Kirkpatrick was consumptive, and Cynthia may have inherited it, and a great sorrow might bring out the latent seeds. At times I am so fearful. But I dare say it is not probable, for I don't think she takes things very deeply to heart."

"Then I am quite at liberty to give up the affair, acting as Cynthia's proxy, if the squire disapproves of it?"

Poor Mrs. Gibson was in a strait at this question.

"No!" she said at last. "We cannot give it up. I am sure Cynthia would not; especially if she thought others were acting for her. And he really is very much in love. I wish he were in Osborne's place."

"Shall I tell you what I should do?" said Mr. Gibson, in real earnest. "However it may be brought about, here are two young people in love with each other. One is as fine a young fellow as ever breathed; the other a very pretty, lively, agreeable girl. The father of the young man



must be told, and it is most likely he will bluster and oppose; for there is no doubt it is an imprudent affair as far as money goes. But let them be steady and patient, and a better lot need await no young woman. I only wish it were Molly's good fortune to meet with such another."

"I will try for her; I will indeed," said Mrs. Gibson, relieved by his change of tone.

"No, don't. That's one thing I forbid. I'll have no 'trying' for Molly."

"Well, don't be angry, dear! Do you know I was quite afraid you were going to lose your temper at one time!"

"It would have been of no use!" said he, gloomily, getting up as if to close the sitting. His wife was only too glad to make her escape. The conjugal interview had not been satisfactory to either. Mr. Gibson had been compelled to face and acknowledge the fact that the wife he had chosen had a very different standard of conduct to that which he had upheld all his life, and had hoped to have seen inculcated in his daughter. He was more irritated than he chose to show; for there was so much of self-reproach in his irritation that he kept the feeling to himself, brooded over it, and allowed a feeling of suspicious dissatisfaction with his wife to grow up in his mind, which extended itself by-and-by to the innocent Cynthia, and caused his manner to both mother and daughter to assume a certain curt severity, which took the latter at any rate with extreme surprise. But on the present occasion he followed his wife up to the drawing-room, and gravely congratulated the astonished Cynthia.

"Has mamma told you?" said she, shooting an indignant glance at her mother. "It is hardly an engagement; and we all pledged ourselves to keep it a secret, mamma among the rest!"

"But, my dearest Cynthia, you could not expect—you could not have wished me to keep a secret from my husband?" pleaded Mrs. Gibson.

"No, perhaps not. At any rate, sir," said Cynthia, turning towards him with graceful frankness, "I am glad you should know it. You have always been a most kind friend to me, and I daresay I should have told you myself, but I did not want it named; if you please, it must still be a secret. In fact, it is hardly an engagement—he" (she blushed and sparkled a little at the enphuism, which implied that there was but one "he" present in her thoughts at the moment) "would not allow me to bind myself by any promise until his return!"

Mr. Gibson looked gravely at her, irresponsive to her winning looks, which at the moment reminded him too forcibly of her mother's ways. Then he took her hand, and said, seriously enough,—

"I hope you are worthy of him, Cynthia, for you have indeed drawn a prize. I have never known a truer or warmer heart than Roger's; and I have known him boy and man."

Molly felt as if she could have thanked her father aloud for this testimony to the value of him who was gone away. But Cynthia pouted a little before she smiled up in his face.

"You are not complimentary, are you, Mr. Gibson?" said she. "He thinks me worthy, I suppose; and if you have so high an opinion of him, you ought to respect his judgment of me." If she hoped to provoke a compliment, she was disappointed, for Mr. Gibson let go of her hand in an absent manner, and sate down in an easy chair by the fire, gazing at the wood embers as if hoping to read the future in them. Molly saw Cynthia's eyes fill with tears, and followed her to the other end of the room, where she had gone to seek some working materials.

"Dear Cynthia," was all she said; but she pressed her hand while trying to assist in the search.

"Oh, Molly, I am so fond of your father; what makes him speak so to me to-night?"

"I don't know," said Molly; "perhaps he's tired."

They were recalled from further conversation by Mr. Gibson. He had roused himself from his reverie, and was now addressing Cynthia.

"I hope you will not consider it a breach of confidence, Cynthia, but I must tell the squire of—of what has taken place to-day between you and his son. I have bound myself by a promise to him. He was afraid—it's as well to tell you the truth—he was afraid" (an emphasis on this last word) "of something of this kind between his sons and one of you two girls. It was only the other day I assured him there was nothing of the kind on foot; and I told him then I would inform him at once if I saw any symptoms."

Cynthia looked extremely annoyed.

"It was the one thing I stipulated for—secrecy."

"But why?" said Mr. Gibson. "I can understand your not wishing to have it made public under the present circumstances. But the nearest friends on both sides! Surely you can have no objection to that?"

"Yes, I have," said Cynthia; "I would not have had any one know if I could have helped it."

"I am almost certain Roger will tell his father."

"No, he won't," said Cynthia; "I made him promise, and I think he is one to respect a promise"—with a glance at her mother, who, feeling herself in disgrace with both husband and child, was keeping a judicious silence.

"Well, at any rate, the story would come with so much better a grace from him that I shall give him the chance; I won't go over to the Hall till the end of the week; he may have written and told his father before then."

Cynthia held her tongue for a little while. Then she said, with tearful pettishness,—

"A man's promise is to override a woman's wish then, is it?"

"I don't see any reason why it should not."

"Will you trust in my reasons when I tell you it will cause me a great deal of distress if it gets known?" She said this in so pleading a voice, that if Mr. Gibson had not been thoroughly displeased and annoyed by his previous conversation with her mother, he must have yielded to her. As

it was, he said coldly,—“Telling Roger's father is not making it public. I don't like this exaggerated desire for such secrecy, Cynthia. It seems to me as if something more than was apparent was concealed behind it.”

“Come, Molly,” said Cynthia, suddenly; “let us sing that duet I've been teaching you; it's better than talking as we are doing.”

It was a little lively French duet. Molly sang it carelessly, with heaviness at her heart; but Cynthia sang it with spirit and apparent merriment; only she broke down in hysterics at last, and flew upstairs to her own room. Molly, heeding nothing else—neither her father nor Mrs. Gibson's words—followed her, and found the door of her bedroom locked, and for all reply to her entreaties to be allowed to come in, she heard Cynthia sobbing and crying.

It was more than a week after the incidents last recorded before Mr. Gibson found himself at liberty to call on the squire; and he heartily hoped that long before then, Roger's letter might have arrived from Paris, telling his father the whole story. But he saw at the first glance that the squire had heard nothing unusual to disturb his equanimity. He was looking better than he had done for months past; the light of hope was in his eyes, his face seemed of a healthy ruddy colour, gained partly by his resumption of out-of-door employment in the superintendence of the works, and partly because the happiness he had lately had through Roger's means, caused his blood to flow with regular vigour. He had felt Roger's going away, it is true; but whenever the sorrow of parting with him pressed too heavily upon him, he filled his pipe, and smoked it out over a long, slow, deliberate re-perusal of Lord Hollingford's letter, every word of which he knew by heart; but expressions in which he made a pretence to himself of doubting, that he might have an excuse for looking at his son's praises once again. The first greetings over, Mr. Gibson plunged into his subject.

“Any news from Roger yet?”

“Oh, yes; here's his letter,” said the squire, producing his black leather case, in which Roger's missive had been placed along with the other very heterogeneous contents.

Mr. Gibson read it, hardly seeing the words after he had by one rapid glance assured himself that there was no mention of Cynthia in it.

“Hum! I see he does not name one very important event that has befallen him since he left you,” said Mr. Gibson, seizing on the first words that came. “I believe I'm committing a breach of confidence on one side; but I'm going to keep the promise I made the last time I was here. I find there is something—something of the kind you apprehended—you understand—between him and my step-daughter, Cynthia Kirkpatrick. He called at our house to wish us good-by, while waiting for the London coach, found her alone, and spoke to her. They don't call it an engagement, but of course it is one.”

“Give me back the letter,” said the squire, in a constrained kind of

voice. Then he read it again, as if he had not previously mastered its contents, and as if there might be some sentence or sentences he had overlooked.

"No!" he said at last, with a sigh. "He tells me nothing about it. Lads may play at confidences with their fathers, but they keep a deal back." The squire appeared more disappointed at not having heard of this straight from Roger than displeased at the fact itself, Mr. Gibson thought. But he let him take his time.

"He's not the eldest son," continued the squire, talking as it were to himself. "But it's not the match I should have planned for him. How came you, sir," said he, firing round on Mr. Gibson, suddenly—"to say when you were last here, that there was nothing between my sons and either of your girls? Why, this must have been going on all the time!"

"I am afraid it was. But I was as ignorant about it as the babe unborn. I only heard of it on the evening of the day of Roger's departure."

"And that's a week ago, sir. What's kept you quiet ever since?"

"I thought that Roger would tell you himself."

"That shows you've no sons. More than half their life is unknown to their fathers. Why, Osborne there, we live together—that's to say, we have our meals together, and we sleep under the same roof—and yet—Well! well! life is as God has made it. You say it's not an engagement yet? But I wonder what I'm doing? Hoping for my lad's disappointment in the folly he's set his heart on—and just when he's been helping me. Is it a folly, or is it not? I ask you, Gibson, for you must know this girl. She has not much money, I suppose?"

"About thirty pounds a year, at my pleasure during her mother's life."

"Whew! It's well he's not Osborne. They'll have to wait. What family is she of? None of 'em in trade, I reckon, from her being so poor?"

"I believe her father was grandson of a certain Sir Gerald Kirkpatrick. Her mother tells me it is an old baronetcy. I know nothing of such things."

"That's something. I do know something of such things, as you are pleased to call them. I like honourable blood."

Mr. Gibson could not help saying, "But I'm afraid that only one-eighth of Cynthia's blood is honourable; I know nothing further of her relations excepting the fact that her father was a curate."

"Professional. That's a step above trade at any rate. How old is she?"

"Eighteen or nineteen."

"Pretty?"

"Yes, I think so; most people do; but it is all a matter of taste. Come, squire, judge for yourself. Ride over and take lunch with us any day you like. I may not be in; but her mother will be there, and you can make acquaintance with your son's future wife."

This was going too fast, however; presuming too much on the quiet-

ness with which the squire had been questioning him. Mr. Hamley drew back within his shell, and spoke in a surly manner as he replied,—

"Roger's 'future wife!' he'll be wiser by the time he comes home. Two years among the black folk will have put more sense in him."

"Possible, but not probable, I should say," replied Mr. Gibson. "Black folk are not remarkable for their powers of reasoning, I believe, so that they have not much chance of altering his opinion by argument, even if they understood each other's language; and certainly if he shares my taste, their peculiarity of complexion will only make him appreciate white skins the more."

"But you said it was no engagement," growled the squire. "If he thinks better of it, you won't keep him to it, will you?"

"If he wishes to break it off, I shall certainly advise Cynthia to be equally willing, that's all I can say. And I see no reason for discussing the affair further at present. I have told you how matters stand because I promised you I would, if I saw anything of this kind going on. But in the present condition of things, we can neither make nor mar; we can only wait." And he took up his hat to go. But the squire was discontent.

"Don't go, Gibson. Don't take offence at what I've said, though I'm sure I don't know why you should. What is the girl like in herself?"

"I don't know what you mean," said Mr. Gibson. But he did; only he was vexed, and did not choose to understand.

"Is she—well, is she like your Molly?—sweet-tempered and sensible—with her gloves always mended, and neat about the feet, and ready to do anything one asks her just as if doing it was the very thing she liked best in the world?"

Mr. Gibson's face relaxed now, and he could understand all the squire's broken sentences and unexplained meanings.

"She is much prettier than Molly to begin with, and has very winning ways. She is always well-dressed and smart-looking, and I know she has not much to spend on her clothes, and always does what she is asked to do, and is ready enough with her pretty, lively answers. I don't think I ever saw her out of temper; but then I'm not sure if she takes things keenly to heart, and a certain obtuseness of feeling goes a great way towards a character for good temper, I've observed. Altogether I think Cynthia is one in a hundred."

The squire meditated a little. "Your Molly is one in a thousand, to my mind. But then you see she comes of no family at all,—and I don't suppose she'll have a chance of much money." This he said as if he were thinking aloud, and without reference to Mr. Gibson, but it nettled the latter gentleman, and he replied somewhat impatiently,—

"Well, but as there is no question of Molly in this business, I don't see the use of bringing her name in, and considering either her family or her fortune."

"No, to be sure not," said the squire, rousing up. "My wits had

gone far afield, and I'll own I was only thinking what a pity it was she would not do for Osborne. But of course it's out of the question—out of the question."

"Yes," said Mr. Gibson, "and if you will excuse me, squire, I really must go now, and then you'll be at liberty to send your wits afield uninterrupted." This time he was at the door before the squire called him back. He stood impatiently hitting his top-boots with his riding-whip, waiting for the interminable last words.

"I say, Gibson, we're old friends, and you're a fool if you take anything I say as an offence. Madam your wife and I did not hit it off the only time I ever saw her. I won't say she was silly, but I think one of us was silly, and it was not me. However, we'll pass that over. Suppose you bring her, and this girl Cynthia (which is as outlandish a Christian name as I'd wish to hear), and little Molly out here to lunch some day,—I'm more at my ease in my own house,—and I'm more sure to be civil, too. We need say nothing about Roger,—neither the lass nor me,—and you keep your wife's tongue quiet, if you can. It will only be like a compliment to you on your marriage, you know—and no one must take it for anything more. Mind, no allusion or mention of Roger, and this piece of folly. I shall see the girl then, and I can judge her for myself; for, as you say, that will be the best plan. Osborne will be here, too; and he's always in his element talking to women. I sometimes think he's half a woman himself, he spends so much money and is so unreasonable."

The squire was pleased with his own speech and his own thought, and smiled a little as he finished speaking. Mr. Gibson was both pleased and amused; and he smiled too, anxious as he was to be gone. The next Thursday was soon fixed upon as the day on which Mr. Gibson was to bring his womenkind out to the Hall. He thought that on the whole the interview had gone off a good deal better than he had expected, and felt rather proud of the invitation of which he was the bearer. Therefore Mrs. Gibson's manner of receiving it was an annoyance to him. She meanwhile had been considering herself as an injured woman ever since the evening of the day of Roger's departure; what business had any one had to speak as if the chances of Osborne's life being prolonged were infinitely small, if in fact the matter was uncertain? She liked Osborne extremely, much better than Roger; and would gladly have schemed to secure him for Cynthia, if she had not shrunk from the notion of her daughter's becoming a widow. For if Mrs. Gibson had ever felt anything acutely it was the death of Mr. Kirkpatrick, and, amiably callous as she was in most things, she recoiled from exposing her daughter wilfully to the same kind of suffering which she herself had experienced. But if she had only known Dr. Nicholls' opinion she would never have favoured Roger's suit; never. And then Mr. Gibson himself; why was he so cold and reserved in his treatment of her since that night of explanation? she had done nothing wrong; yet she was treated as though she were in

disgrace. And everything about the house was flat just now. She even missed the little excitement of Roger's visits, and the watching of his attentions to Cynthia. Cynthia too was silent enough; and as for Molly, she was absolutely dull and out of spirits, a state of mind so annoying to Mrs. Gibson just now, that she vented some of her discontent upon the poor girl, from whom she feared neither complaint nor repartee.

---

#### CHAPTER XXXVI.

##### DOMESTIC DIPLOMACY.

THE evening of the day on which Mr. Gibson had been to see the squire, the three women were alone in the drawing-room, for Mr. Gibson had had a long round and was not as yet come in. They had had to wait dinner for him; and for some time after his return there was nothing done or said but what related to the necessary business of eating. Mr. Gibson was, perhaps, as well satisfied with his day's work as any of the four; for this visit to the squire had been weighing on his mind ever since he had heard of the state of things between Roger and Cynthia. He did not like the having to go and tell of a love affair so soon after he had declared his belief that no such thing existed; it was a confession of fallibility which is distasteful to most men. If the squire had not been of so unsuspicious and simple a nature, he might have drawn his own conclusions from the apparent concealment of facts, and felt doubtful of Mr. Gibson's perfect honesty in the business; but being what he was, there was no danger of such unjust misapprehension. Still Mr. Gibson knew the hot hasty temper he had to deal with, and had expected more violence of language than he really encountered; and the last arrangement by which Cynthia, her mother, and Molly—who, as Mr. Gibson thought to himself, and smiled at the thought, was sure to be a peacemaker, and a sweetener of intercourse—were to go to the Hall and make acquaintance with the squire, appeared like a great success to Mr. Gibson, for achieving which he took not a little credit to himself. Altogether, he was more cheerful and bland than he had been for many days; and when he came up into the drawing-room for a few minutes after dinner, before going out again to see his town-patients, he whistled a little under his breath, as he stood with his back to the fire, looking at Cynthia, and thinking that he had not done her justice when describing her to the squire. Now this soft, almost tuneless whistling, was to Mr. Gibson what purring is to a cat. He could no more have done it with an anxious case on his mind, or when he was annoyed by human folly, or when he was hungry, than he could have flown through the air. Molly knew all this by instinct, and was happy without being aware of it, as soon as she heard the low whistle which was no music after all. But Mrs. Gibson did not like this trick of her husband's; it was not refined she thought, not even "artistic;" if she



could have called it by this fine word it would have compensated her for the want of refinement. To-night it was particularly irritating to her nerves; but since her conversation with Mr. Gibson about Cynthia's engagement, she had not felt herself in a sufficiently good position to complain.

Mr. Gibson began,—“Well, Cynthia; I have seen the squire to-day, and made a clean breast of it.”

Cynthia looked up quickly, questioning with her eyes; Molly stopped her netting to listen; no one spoke.

“You're all to go there on Thursday to lunch; he asked you all, and I promised for you.”

Still no reply; natural, perhaps, but very flat.

“You'll be glad of that, Cynthia, shan't you?” asked Mr. Gibson.

“It may be a little formidable, but I hope it will be the beginning of a good understanding between you.”

“Thank you!” said she, with an effort. “But—but won't it make it public? I do so wish not to have it known, or talked about, not till he comes back or close upon the marriage.”

“I don't see how it should make it public,” said Mr. Gibson. “My wife goes to lunch with my friend, and takes her daughters with her—there's nothing in that, is there?”

“I am not sure that I shall go,” put in Mrs. Gibson. She did not know why she said it, for she fully intended to go all the time; but having said it she was bound to stick to it for awhile; and, with such a husband as hers, the hard necessity was sure to fall upon her of having to find a reason for her saying. Then it came quick and sharp.

“Why not?” said he, turning round upon her.

“Oh, because—because I think he ought to have called on Cynthia first; I've that sort of sensitiveness I can't bear to think of her being slighted because she is poor.”

“Nonsense!” said Mr. Gibson. “I do assure you, no slight whatever was intended. He does not wish to speak about the engagement to anyone—not even to Osborne—that's your wish, too, is it not, Cynthia? Nor does he intend to mention it to any of you when you go there; but, naturally enough, he wants to make acquaintance with his future daughter-in-law. If he deviated so much from his usual course as to come calling here —”

“I am sure I don't want him to come calling here,” said Mrs. Gibson, interrupting. “He was not so very agreeable the only time he did come. But I am that sort of a character that I cannot put up with any neglect of persons I love, just because they are not smiled upon by fortune.” She sighed a little ostentatiously as she ended her sentence.

“Well, then, you won't go!” said Mr. Gibson, provoked, but not wishing to have a long discussion, especially as he felt his temper going.

“Do you wish it, Cynthia?” said Mrs. Gibson, anxious for an excuse to yield.



But her daughter was quite aware of this motive for the question, and replied quietly,—“Not particularly, mamma. I am quite willing to refuse the invitation.”

“It is already accepted,” said Mr. Gibson, almost ready to vow that he would never again meddle in any affair in which women were concerned, which would effectually shut him out from all love affairs for the future. He had been touched by the squire’s relenting, pleased with what he had thought would give others pleasure, and this was the end of it!

“Oh, do go, Cynthia!” said Molly, pleading with her eyes as well as her words. “Do; I am sure you will like the squire; and it is such a pretty place, and he’ll be so much disappointed.”

“I should not like to give up my dignity,” said Cynthia, demurely. “And you heard what mamma said!”

It was very malicious of her. She fully intended to go, and was equally sure that her mother was already planning her dress for the occasion in her own mind. Mr. Gibson, however, who, surgeon though he was, had never learnt to anatomize a woman’s heart, took it all literally, and was excessively angry both with Cynthia and her mother; so angry that he did not dare to trust himself to speak. He went quickly to the door, intending to leave the room; but his wife’s voice arrested him; she said,—

“My dear, do you wish me to go; if you do, I will put my own feelings on one side?”

“Of course I do!” he said, short and stern, and left the room.

“Then I’ll go!” said she, in the voice of a victim—those words were meant for him, but he hardly heard them. “And we’ll have a fly from the ‘George,’ and get a livery-coat for Thomas, which I’ve long been wanting, only dear Mr. Gibson did not like it, but on an occasion like this I’m sure he won’t mind; and Thomas shall go on the box, and ——”

“But, mamma, I’ve my feelings too,” said Cynthia.

“Nonsense, child! when all is so nicely arranged too.”

So they went on the day appointed. Mr. Gibson was aware of the change of plans, and that they were going after all; but he was so much annoyed by the manner in which his wife had received an invitation which had appeared to him so much kinder than he had expected from his previous knowledge of the squire, and his wishes on the subject of his son’s marriage, that Mrs. Gibson heard neither interest nor curiosity expressed by her husband as to the visit itself, or the reception they met with. Cynthia’s indifference as to whether the invitation was accepted or not had displeased Mr. Gibson. He was not up to her ways with her mother, and did not understand how much of this said indifference had been assumed in order to countervent Mrs. Gibson’s affectation and false sentiment. But for all his annoyance on the subject, he was, in fact, very curious to know how the visit had gone off, and took the first opportunity of being alone with Molly to question her about the lunch of the day before at Hamley Hall.

"And so you went to Hamley yesterday after all?"

"Yes; I thought you would have come. The squire seemed quite to expect you."

"I thought of going there at first; but I changed my mind like other people. I don't see why women are to have a monopoly of changeableness. Well! how did it go off? Pleasantly, I suppose, for both your mother and Cynthia were in high spirits last night."

"Yes. The dear old squire was in his best dress and on his best behaviour, and was so prettily attentive to Cynthia, and she looked so lovely, walking about with him, and listening to all his talk about the garden and farm. Mamma was tired, and stopped in-doors, so they got on very well, and saw a great deal of each other."

"And my little girl trotted behind?"

"Oh, yes. You know I was almost at home, and besides—of course——" Molly went very red, and left the sentence unfinished.

"Do you think she's worthy of him?" asked her father, just as if she had completed her speech.

"Of Roger, papa? oh, who is? But she is very sweet, and very, very charming."

"Very charming if you will, but somehow I don't quite understand her. Why does she want all this secrecy? Why was she not more eager to go and pay her duty to Roger's father? She took it as coolly as if I'd asked her to go to church?"

"I don't think she did take it coolly; I believe I don't quite understand her either, but I love her dearly all the same."

"Umph; I like to understand people thoroughly, but I know it's not necessary to women. D'ye really think she's worthy of him?"

"Oh, papa"—said Molly, and then she stopped; she wanted to speak in favour of Cynthia, but somehow she could form no reply that pleased her to this repeated inquiry. He did not seem much to care if he got an answer or not, for he went on with his own thoughts, and the result was that he asked Molly if Cynthia had heard from Roger.

"Yes; on Wednesday morning."

"Did she show it to you? But of course not. Besides, I read the squire's letter, which told all about him."

Now Cynthia, rather to Molly's surprise, had told her that she might read the letter if she liked, and Molly had shrunk from availing herself of the permission, for Roger's sake. She thought that he would probably have poured out his heart to the one sole person, and that it was not fair to listen, as it were, to his confidences.

"Was Osborne at home?" asked Mr. Gibson. "The squire said he did not think he would have come back; but the young fellow is so uncertain——"

"No, he was still from home." Then Molly blushed all over crimson, for it suddenly struck her that Osborne was probably with his wife—that mysterious wife, of whose existence she was cognizant, but of whom she

knew so little, and of whom her father knew nothing. Mr. Gibson noticed the blush with anxiety. What did it mean? It was troublesome enough to find that one of the squire's precious sons had fallen in love within the prohibited ranks; and what would not have to be said and done if anything fresh were to come out between Osborne and Molly. He spoke out at once to relieve himself of this new apprehension.

"Molly, I was taken by surprise by this affair between Cynthia and Roger Hamley—if there's anything more on the tapis let me know at once, honestly and openly. I know it's an awkward question for you to reply to; but I would not ask it unless I had good reasons." He took her hand as he spoke. She looked up at him with clear, truthful eyes which filled with tears as she spoke. She did not know why the tears came; perhaps it was because she was not so strong as formerly.

"If you mean that you're afraid that Osborne thinks of me as Roger thinks of Cynthia, papa, you are quite mistaken. Osborne and I are friends and nothing more, and never can be anything more. That's all I can tell you."

"It's quite enough, little one. It's a great relief. I don't want to have my Molly carried off by any young man just yet; I should miss her sadly." He could not help saying this in the fulness of his heart just then, but he was surprised at the effect these few tender words produced. Molly threw her arms round his neck, and began to sob bitterly, her head lying on his shoulder. "There, there!" said he, patting her on the back, and leading her to the sofa, "that will do. I get quite enough of tears in the day, shed for real causes, not to want them at home, where, I hope, they are shed for no cause at all. There's nothing really the matter, is there, my dear?" he continued, holding her a little away from him that he might look in her face. She smiled at him through her tears; and he did not see the look of sadness which returned to her face after he had left her.

"Nothing, dear, dear papa—nothing now. It is such a comfort to have you all to myself—it makes me happy."

Mr. Gibson knew all implied in these words, and felt that there was no effectual help for the state of things which had arisen from his own act. It was better for them both that they should not speak out more fully. So he kissed her, and said,—

"That's right, dear! I can leave you in comfort now, and indeed I've stayed too long already gossiping. Go out and have a walk—take Cynthia with you, if you like. I must be off. Good-by, little one."

His commonplace words acted like an astringent on Molly's relaxed feelings. He intended that they should do so; it was the truest kindness to her; but he walked away from her with a sharp pang at his heart, which he turned into numbness as soon as he could by throwing himself violently into the affairs and cares of others.

## The Poetry of Provincialisms.

---

DICTIONARIES are not generally considered very amusing. People never read them like other books. They are simply consulted and spoken of as "valuable works." In England Johnson is their name. His heavy shadow clouds them all. And yet the doctor is not always dull, as his definitions of smuggler, pensioner, pirate, will prove to any one who will turn to them in the early editions.

No amount of proof, however, will convince a British public against its will. Dictionaries can, we fear, never become popular; but terrible as is the popular idea about them, far worse is it about glossaries. They are generally supposed to stand to dictionaries as imps do to men, possessing all their bad without any of their good qualities. Dictionaries may be useful, especially in spelling polysyllabic words. But glossaries are a kind of Irish dictionary, carefully containing all words which are never used.

Yet, in spite of this prejudice, we venture to say that any one of our glossaries of provincialisms is far more amusing than ninety-nine out of a hundred novels. You cannot, of course, find plots and screaming incidents in them. But turn to Brockett's *North-Country Glossary*, and you will meet there many a North-country joke, racy of the soil, shining in his pages. Turn again to Hunter's *Hallamshire Glossary*, and you will find there a preface eloquent with true pathos at the decay of so many noble words used by Shakspeare and Milton. Read Forby's *Norfolk* and Barnes' *Dorsetshire Glossaries*, and you will find one overflowing with the poetry of the Anglian peasant, and the other with its author's own native Doric song.

To insist on the value of provincialisms would be something like insisting that Shakspeare was a great poet. Long ago has it been pointed out that the true study of a language must proceed from a study of its provincialisms. In England, with its vast numbers of dialects, many of them very imperfectly known, this is peculiarly the case. Our mixed descent is embodied in our provincialisms. Our vulgar speech, to use Shakspeare's metaphor, is a tangled chain; but every bead preserves in its amber its own origin and history. The discussion of these questions, however, is more suited for a scientific journal than a popular magazine. Our task is less laborious. We propose simply to note a few of those significant words, marked with a delicate refinement, rich with meaning, and often modulated with a soft music of their own, which are found more especially among our peasantry. We are quite aware that a large class of very different words also exists. Rightly treated, they, too, would

yield valuable results. But when Janus has two faces we prefer to look on the pleasantest. And here let us note that by provincialisms we mean both words properly so called and archaisms. It is a great misfortune that we possess no phrase like the Greek *glossa*, which comprehends both.

And the first thing that strikes us in the majority of provincialisms is that the poetry is not "fossil," as Emerson has defined the poetry of words, but alive, quick. Our peasants still speak good Old-English words pregnant with meaning. Living out of doors, their words breathe an out-of-door air. Their images are picturesque and full of life. In the Northern districts a starving man is said to be "hunger-poisoned," and people are "bone-tired." Crops when spoilt by rain are said in the Eastern counties to be "water-slain," and in Westmoreland, when they ripen well, are said to "addle well," as if a notion of working and earning were implied. In Leicestershire, a peasant will talk of a bee "kicking" him instead of stinging him, just as the Greeks used *πληγμα*. In Derbyshire he will say that he "feels a smell," just as in Exodus the Israelites "saw the thunderings" at Mount Sinai. Our peasantry still remain in many respects in an early stage of society. Hence they retain so many of those primitive words, language-marks, by which we may measure the flow and ebb of our language. On the other hand, our artificial life in large towns is emasculating our speech. The strong metaphor has become faded. The colour is washed out with rose-water. Like Chaucer's friar, we lisp from wantonness. How differently each grade of society speaks may be seen in the fact that in the east of London "rooms" are always advertised, towards Holborn "lodgings," but west of Regent Street nothing shorter than "apartments" would seem to let.

Most certainly the labourer now, more than any one else, "speaks the tongue that Shakspeare spake." Could he, in these days of competitive examinations, be tested in a knowledge of English, he would assuredly make more marks—we believe that is the competitive examination phrase—than the clubmen of Pall Mall and the fair dwellers in Belgravia. How many of our readers can tell offhand what "fat rascals" and "batlets" are in Shakspeare? And what did the same poet mean by a "mankind-woman," "a lad of wax," and "a thill horse?" Yet all these terms are now provincialisms, and would be recognized as such by many a North-country peasant.

Or take the later English of Milton, and we venture to say that few of our readers know precisely what Milton intended when, on the sixth day of the creation, he says,—

The grassy clods now calved;

or the meaning of "plighted" in the lines from *Comus*:—

Gay creatures of the element,  
That in the colours of the rainbow live,  
And play i' the plighted clouds.

Some rustics of our acquaintance would answer as Mr. Brockett's old woman did when she was shown a Wycliffe's Bible, "Ay, that's the way people used to talk in my younger days, before they became so precious fine."

Nevertheless, the peasant's English is not generally appreciated. He labours just now under the imputation that in some cases the whole of his vocabulary consists of only three hundred words. This is stated not merely in public lectures and newspapers, but by such an authority as Professor Max Müller.\* Of course, we should not presume to contradict a statement coming from such a source without a far more careful examination than we are able to give. Some such favoured abodes of silence may certainly exist in parts of England; but as far as our experience goes we know no such Coventries. As a rule, we believe that the peasant uses more than that number of words with reference only to his daily work. Nothing is more startling than the variety of his expressions. Rich as an Italian, he revels in diminutives—in "ing," "let," and "ock." He teems with synonyms. A Derbyshire peasant uses eight different terms for a pigsty. Turn to "hay-making" in Barnes and Lewis, and the *Teesdale Glossary*, and each process will be found to bear a different name. If, instead of repeating the hackneyed quotation about the Norman "beef" and the Saxon "cow," we would collect all the Yorkshire terms for "a beast," remembering with Shakspeare that—

The steer, the heifer, and the calf,  
Are all called neat,

we should be rendering some justice to the richness of provincialisms.

The real truth is, that instead of the work of collecting provincialisms being accomplished, a great deal of it has yet to be done. Stoddart has tabulated a number of glossaries, but many of them are only so in name. Thus Warner's glossary of Hampshire is absurdly deficient. The recently printed glossaries of Berkshire and Gloucestershire are only scanty lists. Many counties possess not even them. The rich district of the Trent, and the richer district of the Derbyshire Derwent, are both unrepresented. Warwickshire, with all its local associations, still waits for its glossarist. And the "mon who stubbed up Thornaby waiiste" still looks for an interpreter.

Many, too, of those glossaries, on which much labour has been expended, will still bear supplementing. A curious illustration of this occurred to ourselves when lately staying in a country village. The ground had been twice worked over by two different collectors. The later, too, had gleaned a thousand words, which his predecessor had neglected. The spot did not, therefore, seem very promising. We, however, in the course of a month bagged some hundred and fifty new specimens. This gives an average of five a day, which may be looked upon as very fair sport. We are sorry to add that an excellent clergyman

---

\* *The Science of Language*, 1st series, 4th edition, p. 277.

and an energetic schoolmaster are committing irreparable mischief by teaching the people to read.

To illustrate, however, what we have said about the richness of provincialisms, we will take a few specimens. Over and over again the peasant uses terms for which we have no synonyms. Thus, a crop of grass is known in Devonshire as "a shear of grass," as opposed to a crop of corn. Rain in the Northern counties, when it falls perpendicularly, is said to "sile down," as if in allusion to its passing through a sieve. In the Southern counties, where oxen are used for ploughing, their shoes are called "cues" as opposed to horses' shoes, just as the Greeks sometimes seemed to have used  $\chi\lambda\eta$  in opposition to  $\delta\pi\lambda\eta$ . In the Midland districts, ears of corn when thrashed are known by the appropriate term "cavvins." For all these terms we have in our literary English no synonyms, and can only represent them in a more or less roundabout fashion. But it is in describing the phenomena of Nature that the richness of our provincialisms is fully seen. No one, perhaps, has ever walked by the side of a river without being struck by those glassy spots, those "clear eyes," as sailors would call them, which every now and then appear, especially where the current runs deep, though he has found himself tongue-tied to express the appearance. Poets have overcome the difficulty by the help of metaphors. Thus Browne, in his *Masque of Circe and Ulysses*, sings,—

Where flowes Lethe without coyle,  
Softly like a stream of oyle.

And Mr. Tennyson, by the same not over-pleasant image, speaks of a bay being "oily-calm." But the North-country peasant knows it by the pure Old-English word *keld*, a fountain, spring, with reference, as it were, to the clearness of a well.

Again, on gusty days, no one can have failed noticing how flaws of wind dash along the surface of a stream, marking their course by black streaks and patches. And here, as in the other case, we have no word to express the appearance. A modern pre-Raphaelite poet sings,—

Mark where the passing wind shoots javelin-like  
Its skeleton shadow on the broad-backed wave.

And the description is singularly minute. Most of the poets, however, have described it as a curl upon the waters. Ben Jonson and Beaumont and Fletcher all use the same image. The former speaks of streams "curled with the cold wind," and the latter of—

Winds that fly  
Over the crystal face of smoothest streams,  
Leaving no curl behind them.

Mr. Tennyson falls into a somewhat similar conceit, when in the *Lotos Eaters*, he talks of "crisping ripples," and in a little early piece of the "babbling runnel crispeth." He is, however, far more happy when,



probably without knowing it, he strikes an older note. Thus in the *Lady of Shalot* he sings of—

Little breezes dusk and shiver  
Through the wave that runs for ever.

Now the Greeks called the phenomenon *φρίξ*, connected with *φρίσσω*, and the Romans *horror*, and it is this feeling of shuddering which Mr. Tennyson has here so truly reproduced. We have no term for the appearance in literary English. Sailors at sea name it when seen on a larger scale by the expressive term "cat's-paw." The North-country peasant, however, knows it by the name "acker," implying, as it were, a space ploughed up by the wind.

And it is especially in reference to natural objects that the real poetry of provincialisms is seen. The peasant, from his occupations, is brought into a wholesome contact with Nature. He does not enjoy only her sunshine, but her frosts and storms. His eye is trained from childhood to note each varying change of the seasons. He is the poet whom Marvell imagined, whose sun-dial is made of flowers, and whose calendar is dated by the song of birds. Take, for instance, his names of flowers. How much more beautiful is his simple term "windflower" than the scientific "anemone," which Tennyson's "Northern Farmer" characteristically turns into "enemies." Both mean precisely the same; yet there is the same difference between them that the master of masters, Aristotle, observed between *ροδοδάκτυλος* and *λευκοροδοδάκτυλος*. The peasant christens his flowers after their habits. In the Midland counties the common goatsbeard is his "nap-at-noon" and his "go-to-bed-at-noon," and the star of Bethlehem is his "six o' clock flower," from their closing their flowers at those times. The scarlet pimpernel, from its susceptibility to the changes of the weather, is his "shepherd's dial." The orchis is his "cuckoo-flower," because it blossoms when the cuckoo is first heard, and the arum, whose leaf is seen still earlier, is his "wake-robin." Like Hesiod, he knows the seasons by these signs. In Dorsetshire he calls the haws "the pixy-pears," which, as Mr. Barnes remarks, is scientifically true, as the whitethorn and the pear belong to the same order. Mr. Tennyson is not so accurate when, in *Aylmer's Field*, he sings of—

The pretty marestalk forest, fairy pines.

Again in the Northern counties the common wild vetchling is called, from the angles of its pod, "the angle-berry." Hall was not more observant when he noted—

The thrice three-angled beech-nut shell,  
Or chestnut's armed husks, or hid kernell;

nor Mr. Tennyson more true, when he sings how Katie's hair resembled—

In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell  
Divides threefold to show the fruit within.

The peasant has, too, like his fellow in Germany, jealously preserved



all the old religious names of our flowers. We cannot any longer appreciate their beauty and their meaning, when the maiden's garland is no longer hung in our churches, nor the marigold strewed on her bier. The saint no longer protects his flower. Yet some faint echo of a religion for ever past lingers in such words as Lady's thistle, and Lady's fingers, and Lady-smocks, "all silver white," as Shakspeare sings.

He has, too, preserved for us the old names, by which Shakspeare and Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher knew the flowers. Such quaint old names as "Love lies a-bleeding," "Three faces under a hood," "Dead-men's fingers," "Sops in wine," live only in the pages of our Elizabethan dramatists, and in the mouths of our rustics.

So, too, of birds. The peasant christens them like his flowers after their habits. Novalis, who so frequently says that a poet is the truest naturalist, would have been delighted with his names. And it is the poet and the peasant who have loved to treasure up the unobserved beauties of nature. Hesiod notes the spots on the throat of the nightingale-thrush. Shakspeare counts them in the cowslip-bell. Thus their descriptions possess the highest charm—truth. And it is in this spirit of minute observation that the peasant has named his birds. You cannot translate his names. It is like Prior translating the *Nutbroune Mayde* into the ugly elegance of his *Henry and Emma*. Thus in the Northern counties the pied wagtail is the "seed-bird," from its reappearing after the winter, in March, when the barley is being sown. In the Eastern counties the cock-chaffinch is the "wheatsel-bird," from its habit of congregating in flocks about harvest time. The common woodpecker, so noticeable from its loud cry, and bright green plumage, and red head, possesses at least half-a-dozen names. Mr. Matthew Arnold has very justly praised Maurice de Guéin for speaking of the woodpecker's laugh. But the West-country peasant ages ago called it the "yaffingale," that is, the laugh-singer, and the North-countryman the "iccol" and the "haho"—names which give the echo of its cry. In the Midland counties it is the peasant's "rain-bird," and his "rain-tabberer," because its cry generally forebodes rain, like the cry of the raven of old, *κόραξ ἀμβρόσια κρᾶζων*.

It has been often brought as a reproach against words formed in a rude stage of society that they are too vague. There is some truth in the charge, but not so much as has been stated. Thus the provincial "bud-bird" of Herefordshire, the bullfinch, when translated into German, becomes the nightingale (*Sprosser-sänger*). On reflection, however, the vagueness disappears. The first bird is so called because it eats the buds, the second because it sings when they are bursting. Science, however, cannot at present afford to throw hard words at provincialisms. Too often in her nomenclature has she failed to interpret Nature, too often only given us the skeleton leaf instead of the flower. On the other hand a long list of provincialisms might be given, where by a word a whole train of associations is aroused, and the close relationship of all

things shown. Thus in the North the wryneck is called the "cuckoo-maiden," because its song foretells the cuckoo's approach; whilst in the South the tit-lark is known as the "butty-lark," or companion lark, because the cuckoo so frequently lays its eggs in that bird's nest. Again, Shakspeare has been praised for so accurately painting the martin's "procreant cradle." In the same vein, however, does the rustic, in different counties, call the long-tailed tit the "oven-bird" and the "barrel-bird," from its making a long moss and lichen-woven nest.

Again, too, it is worth noticing how our peasants have recognized in birds "the sweet sense of kindred." The hedge-sparrow is still in some parts Isaac. The red-breast, as long as the English language lasts, will have no other name than Robin, the *Jean le rouge-gorge* of Normandy. The house-sparrow is still in many parts Skelton's "Philip," the Philip of the Elizabethan dramatists, and of Cartwright. He is evidently so called from his chirp; and in his English provincialism you may find the true meaning of Catullus's *pipilabat*, and the key to several of his European names.

But the peasant's names for all animals are equally apt and expressive. He has wisely preserved what we have carelessly thrown away or corrupted. Thus the mole is in some counties still Shakspeare's "mould-warp," and its movements under ground are called by the good old word "yedding." In the Midland counties a small brown cantharis is known as "the sailor," the poetry of which is best seen in Emerson's description of a bee—

Sailor of the atmosphere,  
Swimmer through the waves of air,  
Voyager of light and moon.

The bat claims half-a-dozen names. In the Eastern counties, from its fluttering, wavering flight, it is the flittermouse, the German *Fledermaus*, Ben Jonson's—

Giddy flittermouse with leathern wings.

In the South-west it is the rere-mouse, which means exactly the same: the Old-English *hrere-mus*, from *hreran*, to flutter: after whom Titania with her fairies hunts—

Rere-mice with their leathern wings  
To make my small elves coats.

In Somersetshire it is the leather-mouse, and in Devonshire the leather-bird, Ben Jonson's—

Bat, and ever a bat, a rere-mouse,  
And bird of twilight.

All these names have been given from close observation, and are instinct with the poetry of truth. Dr. Adams, in the *Transactions of the Philological Society*, has shown us the beauty of the provincial names of insects, and we sincerely trust that he will extend not only the field of his observations, but give the public the benefit of his learning and taste in some more generally accessible form. The value, too, of such provincialisms

cannot from a philological point of view be overrated. The same laws that governed the word-building of the Greeks hold good with our peasantry. And Garnett has aptly shown that the Greek words for cat (*αἰλουρος*) and squirrel (*σκιουρος*) are founded on identically the same principles as those on which the Norfolk peasant formed his provincial term "lobster" for a stoat.

Again, the poetry of the peasant is conspicuous in his onomatopoeic words. He possesses a series of imitative sounds for the cries of various animals. In the Northern counties the whinnying of a foal is represented by "wicker." Cattle are said to "blore," and sheep "rout." But there is no use in filling up a page with words which any ploughboy can give with far more native grace than we can. He is, too, in his names of birds a second Aristophanes. Thus the winchat is called from its note "eufic." And "sjinc," on whose derivation so much learning has been wasted, is simply formed from the cry of the chaffinch, which in some counties is also called "pink." Many a derivation of this kind may be solved by a morning's walk in the country.

There is, too, a remarkable class of words expressive of the sounds of rain and wind, and the falling of water, used only amongst the peasantry. Thus, to express the sound that David heard—"the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees" (2 Samuel v. 24.)—the West-countryman says the wind "hoois," and the North-countryman that "it soughs." The latter word is used by Chaucer; but two modern poets have also felt its aptness and beauty. In the *Excursion*, Wordsworth sings of "the pine-wood's steady sough," and in one of his earlier poems Tennyson sings of—

The wavy swell of the soughing reeds.

And the way in which the peasant applies other onomatopoeic words to describe natural facts, is not less remarkable. We have heard rustics say of rain and hail and streams that "they hissed," of lightning that "it fizzed again," and of the sea-foam, on a rough day, that "it frizzled again." Such expressions of course present a very shabby appearance by the side of such glorious epithets and ringing terminations as *ἡχήσσα* and *πολυρροίσβοιο* which Homer would have applied to such phenomena. But the same truth underlies both. The hissing hail of our peasants well conveys in its way what Mr. Tennyson means when in *Sir Galahad* he says:—

The tempest crackles on the leads,  
And, ringing, spins from brand and mail,  
But o'er the dark a glory spreads  
And gilds the driving hail.

Which is exactly the same as Virgil's

Tam multa in tectis crepitans salit horrida grando.

And the hiss of the rain explains Shakspeare's "shower singing in the

wind," and Pindar's *φρίσσοντες ὑμβροί*. And the fizz of the lightning is exactly equivalent to Wordsworth's expression,

I saw the crackling flashes drive.

It is easy enough to laugh. Jeffrey ridiculed Wordsworth's excellent epithet "whizzing" applied to a quoit. Doubtless its effect is poor, when compared with the majesty of

*Δεινὴ δὲ κλαγγὴ γένει' ἀργυρεοῦ βιβίου.*

But then the poet is describing, not a God shooting with a silver bow, but a dalesman hurling a quoit. And so our peasant's expressions of "fizzing," and "frizzling," and "hissing," when applied to the grand and awful manifestations of nature, at first sight appear ridiculous. But there are two ways of treating a subject. The poets themselves shall answer. Our first quotation shall be from Fletcher, who makes a madman say—

Blow, blow, thou west wind,  
Blow till thou rive, and make the sea run roaring,  
I'll hiss it down again with a bottle of ale.

The next shall be from Shelley's *Alastor*:

A pine,  
Rock-rooted, stretched athwart the vacancy  
Its swinging boughs, to each inconstant blast  
Yielding one only response, at each pause  
In most familiar cadence with the howl,  
The thunder, and the hiss of homeless streams.

Here the peasant's expression comes out in all its full force.

The peasant's metaphors, too, are redolent with poetry. In the Midland counties he talks of "the winter of the blackthorn," meaning the rough cold weather which visits us early in April, when the earliest blackthorn-blossom is mingled with the latest snows. So, too, autumn is still "the fall," so aptly used by Tennyson in his *Northern Farmer*, and the end of life is the "sere of life," Shakspeare's "sere and yellow leaf." In Yorkshire it is "the chair-day." And of all the metaphors upon old age which Aristotle has given us in his *Poetics*, and which industrious commentators have piled up in the notes, none is more striking. In some counties the latter part of the day is the "edge of dark," which is doubly beautiful when applied to the end of life, "the going home," as it is called in Yorkshire. In some respects provincialisms form the unwritten poetry of a nation. They contain the germs of poems. Thus in the North-western counties the peasant talks of "a plume of trees." Marvell showed his taste and sense of beauty by setting the expression in his verse,

Upon its crest, this mountain grave,  
A plume of aged trees does wave.

Mr. Ruskin has been rightly praised for applying such a bold yet true metaphor as "arm-holes" to those pits which are scooped under the branches at the point where they leave the tree. The same praise should

not be refused to the North-countryman who talks of "the clough" of the tree, literally the valley, the cleft, where the branches part. The peasant's terms are full of grace. Water-lilies in the North are "water-bells," and corn-ears in Northamptonshire are "corn-bells." The moon, in Devonshire, does not change, but "tines," that is, closes her light, just in the same way that Shelley says she "swoons." In Derbyshire the wind, when it eddies into any nook, is said to "bosom in;" and a mountain-range, which encloses a valley, to "wing round" it. In Yorkshire old wood pierced with holes is termed "bee-sucken." Evening, in the Eastern counties, is called "crow-time," from the rooks then flocking homeward. In the North ponds are said to be "mossed over," when covered with Shakspeare's "green mantle of the stagnant pool." You may cull posies of such words.

In fact, the phrases of our old poets now linger only in the mouths of our peasants. The echo of Piers Plowman's voice still rings not so very far off from his own Malvern Hills. The proverbs in Chaucer may still be met in the North. Shakspeare's flowers are still, in his native county, called by the names which he called them. Ben Jonson's "knots," or "buddings of the spring," are not forgotten in Devonshire. Milton's "rathe primrose" is still understood in Wiltshire. In the Northern counties his "spring," for a grove, and his "swink't labourer," are both known; whilst in Oxfordshire the shepherd still tells his "tale" of sheep, and in Northamptonshire—

The star that bids the shepherd fold,

is still known as "the shepherd's lamp."

These things prove at least the strength and stability of the English language, and the affectionate feelings with which the peasant clings to those homely sounds which his forefathers used. But many of our most expressive terms are fast dying. That fine word, "knoll," used with such effect by the Queen to Theseus in the *Two Noble Kinsmen*—

Remember that your fame

Knolls in the ear o' the world,

retains its charm only, perhaps, among our Roman Catholic peasantry. Shakspeare's "herb o' grace" is in many parts sadly corrupted, and hardly recognizable under the form "herby-grass." Some have altogether perished. Fletcher's "Lady-gloves," that is, fox-gloves, "le gant de Notre Dame," are lost. Day by day, too, they will go. As schools are built and schoolmasters increase, so will the old-world words perish in the struggle with the new. We say, schoolmasters, for the old village dame was in herself a chronicle of word-lore. Yet so it must be. The wheel of necessity crushes words like all other things to pieces. They, too, are governed by the law which evolves progress out of destruction.

In the meantime, however, it is pleasant to go forth into some of the quiet nooks which may be found in the Midland and Northern counties, and hear such primitive-sounding words as "bell-house" for tower,

"wall-root" for the bottom of a wall, "hand-stocking" for mitten, "nail-passer" for gimlet, and "overtune" for the burden of a song;—to come upon, as in Devonshire, such a primitive word as "gusan-chick" for gosling, or, as in Gloucestershire, "furse-pig" for hedgehog—Shakespeare's hedge-pig. Pleasant indeed is it in these days to escape from the flash of the fast novelist and the slang of the pressman, and meet such good Old-English plurals as "peazen" for peas, and "been" for bees, and "shoon" for shoes, used by Keats.

Such words have an antique grace of their own. They smack of Eld. We hardly require Aristotle to refute Bryso, and to insist on the necessity of employing apt and beautiful words. Words are, in fact, the colours by which an author paints his pictures. And the colour which he uses betrays the man. In our day the exigencies of science, of commerce, the requirements of modern life, the new thoughts, the new feelings, to which progress gives birth, are in one sense expanding, and in another restricting, the meaning of words. Our language requires both enriching and purifying. And we can best do this by drawing on our rich mines of dialects. They still fortunately furnish us with an armoury by which we may hold our own against all the hideous hybridisms which are invading us.

No one needs to be told how much the translation of the Bible, and Shakespeare, have done to arrest the decay of home-sprung words. And one of the few healthy signs of the day in literature, is the manner in which Mr. Tennyson has drawn from the common well of vulgar speech. His early poems were marked by a delicate use of provincialisms, some of which we have quoted. The power was again seen in the *Idylls of the King*, but is most conspicuous in his last work. We speak not of the genuine Lincolnshire dialect of the *Northern Farmer*, but of *Aylmer's Field*, where provincialisms would at first sight seem out of place. Yet to them the descriptive passages owe some of their chief beauties. Thus we read of cottages which in late summer—

Were parcel-bearded with the traveller's joy,  
In autumn parcel ivy-clad.

The Elizabethan poets used the word "parcel" in the same way, and some thirty years ago various attempts were made to revive it; but except in a technical sense, we believe it is now restricted to the lower orders. Again Mr. Tennyson has rightly poached the word "conies" from the same class. He has, too, re-introduced the good old common name for kestrel, and with a touch of nature tells how Sir Aylmer pauses—

For about as long  
As the wind-hover hangs in balance.

Every one who has ever watched the kestrel hanging poised in the air, perhaps above some field-mouse, knows the truthfulness of the name, which finds a parallel in the Welsh "cudyll y gwint." Mr. Ruskin somewhere speaks about "swallows leaning against the wind," but the pro-

vincial name of the kestrel is quite as vivid as that description. With it may be compared another local name, "stand-gale," and also "crutch-tail," formerly applied to a kite, both equally descriptive of the birds. But Mr. Tennyson has yet more to tell us about the habits of hawks. For instance, take the following landscape, when Sir Aylmer's hall is pulled down—

And the broad woodland parcelled into farms,  
And where the two contrived their daughter's good  
Lies the hawk's cast.

The last word we know well as a Lincolnshire term for the pellets of indigestible food which owls and hawks throw up. In the High Peak of Derbyshire the more expressive term "hawk's-cud" is used.

We will not stop over the words "burr," for the seed-vessel of the burdock, used by Shakspeare; nor "Martin's summer," also used by Shakspeare; nor "pock-pitten," though we perhaps like the form "pock-fretten" better—all of them used with a poet's nice sense of fitness. We will rather dwell on the picture of Leoline and Edith, how

With her he dipt  
Against the rush of the air in the prone swing,  
Made blossom-ball or daisy chain.

Blossom-ball, if it be not a provincialism, of which we are not sure, is evidently formed after the West-country "cowslip-ball," the "tisty-tosty ball" of Dorsetshire and Somersetshire, which children yearly make. Ben Jonson uses a somewhat similar word for the downy globe of the dandelion, and sings that Earine's footstep is so light that it will not bend a blade of grass,

Nor shake the downy blow-ball from his stalk.

Again, take the picture of Sir Aylmer, who—

When dawn  
Aroused the black republic on his elms,  
Sweeping the froth-fly from the fescue brush'd  
Thro' the dim meadow.

"Fescue," though a Romance word, and formerly in common use, is now decidedly a provincialism, and we have to thank Mr. Tennyson for restoring us the castaway. "Froth-fly" we do not remember to have met as a provincialism. It sounds like one, and is more expressive than the common word "brock." If it be Mr. Tennyson's own coinage, we must congratulate him on forming a word so true in its analogy.

We think that we have now shown, as far as a slight sketch would permit, not only the vigour and the life that colour our provincialisms, but also how in the hands of a poet they may be made to yield fresh beauty. Many of them still wait to be taken up. The requirements of science will absorb some. The special use of "forecast," a term which never died out in the Midland counties, with reference to the weather, is a good instance how a forgotten word may be rendered serviceable. But



science, as a rule, makes her own words. To the poet must the care of our provincialisms be left. He alone possesses the instinct to perceive which must be kept, which rejected. And he must choose them, on the one hand, from no sentimental feeling; nor, on the other, from any Dryasdust prejudice, but simply because he finds them the most expressive and the most beautiful. If he chooses them from any other reason he will only be the resurrectionist, instead of the Prometheus of words. Clare, for instance, possessed a far wider knowledge of provincialisms than Mr. Tennyson, but he knew not how to make a proper use of his riches. His verse is consequently only encumbered by them, and has sunk from the high purposes of poetry to become simply an object of interest to the philologist and the county historian.

And never had we more need of fresh life and vigour in our poetry than at the present moment. Our Muses have emigrated from the woody heights of Parnassus and the springs of Hippocrene into Mayfair. Poetry, instead of being an oak of the forest, nurtured by the wind and the rain, is now a plant forced in the hot air of drawing-rooms. The manliness of tone, which so stamped itself upon our Elizabethan dramatists, seems in danger of dying. Those great poets mixed with the crowd, wrestled with a thousand ills, and throve upon misfortunes, which would overwhelm the modern minstrel. One was a brick-mason, one a parish-clerk, and the greatest the son of a butcher. Their plays are full of life, of its stern trials, such as the poor only know, reflect man's passions and joys and aspirations, and above all, are written in strong homely English. And yet upon mere words poetry of course does not depend. You may use the most beautiful words, as a limner the most beautiful colours, and still produce only a daub. For poetry comes only out of a high, earnest life, purified by discipline, and fortified by reason in the essential goodness of things, and then comes only at those rare intervals when

Our great good parts put wings into our souls.

---



## The Shoddy Aristocracy of America.

—♦—

Show me the fortunate man, and the Gods I forget in a moment.—SCHILLER.

—♦—

SOMEWHERE on this broad earth can always be found fit prototypes of the most wildly-conceived heroes and heroines of the fairy-tales. There are little Jacks in our day subduing giants quite as formidable as those of the time of the great Blunderbore. The genii Steam and Electricity are offering seven-league boots and listening-caps to old and young; and bean-stalk ladders are springing up at the feet of the restless Jacks whom fortune favours. The age has its drowsy Gullivers and its wide-awake Lilliputians, its Sinbads, big with adventure, and its "army of faithful believers," tilting at everything. There are still Pussies-in-Boots faithfully serving my lord the Marquis of Carabas; daughters spinning weary threads from distaffs never growing less; social harps which at last cry "Master!" and waken terrible ogres, and inquisitive wives vainly trying to re-polish the tell-tale key. We have Blue Beards, with sheathed scimitars, grimly extending their matrimonial relations; and sister Annies ever watchful of another's needs. There are Sleeping Beauties, alas! by the thousand; and fair ones with golden locks for whom princes and poets struggle. There are beasts, too, whom we learn to love, after we have entered their rose-lit sanctuaries; and monsters who have sung—

Fee! fo! fum!

I smell the blood of an Englishman!

There are Strong-backs who bear the world's burdens, and Hop-o'-my-Thumbs who contrive to slip its responsibilities; maidens whose tongues shed dangerous vipers, and maidens whose words are a shower of roses and pearls. Proud sisters are every day being humbled; and patient Cinderellas dropping the slipper that shall win them the prince. Foolish old couples are wasting their "wishes" on black-pudding; and wise younger ones are finding the "treasure of life" in each other. There are saintly, ministering Red Riding-hoods, and—heaven save the mark! grandams, with very big eyes and ears, eager to devour them. Men and women are still sighing for the waters of perpetual youth; and duenna-dragons are guarding enchanted and enchanting maidens. There are Ali Babas and envious Cassims; sham oil-merchants and avenging Morgianas; wicked but lucky pedlers and tailors, like those in the tales of the brothers Grimm, and Aladdins with very wonderful lamps indeed!

And here, after drifting down the stream of fairy lore, we cast anchor;

for it is with these pedlars and tailors and Aladdins that we have to deal. In short, at the risk of mixing the metaphor, I propose to "strike oil," the oil that fills the Aladdin-lamps of our own matter-of-fact day, when men cry *Cui bono?* to everything, and expect title-deeds to castles in the air.

The discerning reader need not be told the name of this oil; nor that the tailors and pedlars alluded to, with their fleet-winged geese and magic packs, are the so-called Shoddy contractors of the land of Stars and Stripes.

Verily, it is true. Here in this far land, wherein I write, the wildest tales of fairy chroniclers are rivalled by every-day experience. What are the exploits of Ali Baba compared with the discoveries of those who first said 'Open Sesame' to the caves of Cali Fornia, and other geological misers? And what was good Mrs. Cassim's zeal compared with that of the indefatigable Want-to-get-rich of modern days? Then, when the caves were opened, how everybody rushed in, some coming out richly-laden, and some finding themselves (metaphorically) drawn and quartered, like poor Cassim! But why tell an old story? There is newer material for fairy work than this. There are these tailors and pedlars and Aladdins at whom all America is just now gazing with distended eyes, wondering at the new palaces flashing into existence, at the streams of wealth flowing into startled pockets, at the presto-touch changing ragged clowns into dazzling gentlemen, and above all, at the fearful 'spell' being cast upon American life by these strange creatures, lifted, as it were by enchantment, into sudden wealth and importance.

We shall consider the pedlars and tailors, *i.e.* the Shoddy contractors, first. 'Shoddy' according to one Simmonds—whom both Worcester and Webster use as a cat's-paw in handling the ugly dissyllable—is "a fibrous material obtained by 'devilling' refuse woollen goods, old stockings, rags, &c. It differs from 'mungo,'" he says, "in being of an inferior quality, and is spun into yarn with a little fresh wool, and made into coarse cloth, druggut, padding, and other articles."

So say the lexicographers. But in this fast age yesterday's dictionary is almost as much out of date as yesterday's newspaper. In the world's great book of synonyms we find that Shoddy has been given a far wider signification. If Liszt, in his *Life of Chopin*, can devote pages to the explanation of the Polish word *zal*, we should require volumes to fairly describe the (now) American word 'Shoddy.' It means pretence, vulgarity, assumption, the depth of folly and the highest altitude of the ridiculous; also gilded ignorance, mock patriotism, wire-pulling, successful knavery, swindling, nay treason itself. On the other hand, it implies innocent good luck, reward of merit, and the miraculous and sudden appearance (in the newly-rich man) of super-intelligence and all the cardinal virtues. It means vast expectations in hovels and discomfort in palaces; hippoo-birds, wretched with *real* golden crowns, the secret envy of hippos with the comfortable yellow crest common to hippoodom. It

means gorgeous affluence in the son, and bare penury in the father. It *will* mean ignorant dismay in the son at the scornful superiority of the grandson—and grandsons who will feebly ignore the name and character of the founder of their illustrious house.

And this word, with its varied meanings and strong significance, has been raised to its present altitude by no less a lever than the great American rebellion.

Now a great rebellion calls for two things—men to carry it on, and men to resist it; and these, whatever may be their several patriotic aspirations, their valour and enthusiasm, must be fed, clothed, and equipped. Their respective governments, having no time to lose, stand on the “outer wall” of circumstance, and call loudly for the vendors of food, clothing, and ammunition to draw near. Honest industry hears the call, and prepares to answer it as far as conscience and means will allow. Meantime enterprise, whether honest or not, pricks up its ears—“Hallo! here’s luck! country in trouble—wants something in a hurry—no time to examine—little down-hearted, I see—no harm in cheating the Government.” And the consequence is, a CONTRACT made so very advantageously to the Treasury Department that honest merit sighs, says, “*I* can’t afford to go in,” and settles down to the old routine.

The fortunate contractor at once buys up all the floating “poor stuff” at home and abroad; and his minions, with their sub-contracts, fatten themselves like vampires on the poor serving-women of the land. Then come immense supplies of army clothing—flannel under-shirts, made of “human creatures’ lives,” and blankets and uniforms of veritable “shoddy.” The armies march forth in gallant array. Soon follow innumerable catastrophes like that described by an observing troubadour of 1861:—

“March!” said the Colonel; “forward march!”  
Crack went the seams in halves!  
A hundred steps—a hundred men  
Showed just two hundred calves!”

Notwithstanding this sad event, confiding officials still trust to the shoddy garments. They fade, and rip, and burst apart, and drop to pieces, but the contractor feels secure. His fortune is made, let the soldiers shiver and curse as they may. What are a few thousand poorly-clad men to him? *He* is comfortable in his “marble halls.”

Then come the pedlers with their packs—everything by this time valued at an exorbitant rate—for must not the army be fed and equipped? With lying tongues and exultant hearts they present their wares. The inspectors are in a hurry; in fact, their eyes are dim with war-smoke. Everything is “passed”—leaky tents, glued shoes, mouldy oats, hickory beef, rusty pork, poor muskets, and worse ammunition. Broken-down horses and donkeys are transmuted (on paper) into war-steeds and mules; and leaky, unseaworthy tugs, yclept “vessels” by Shoddy, are sold at fabulous prices for the pursuit of nimble privateers, and the safe trans-

portation of the country's defenders! The Treasury grows lean, but, like Mynheer Von Dunderland, the pedler-contractors grow fat. They count their gains in hundreds and thousands and millions; they thrive and feast and are merry, while their victims—they who feel the real weight of their iniquity—are cheated of their soldier-death, and must fall, in swarms, from the effects of insufficient shelter, bad food, and positive poison.

Of course there are marked exceptions to these contracts and contractors; but that they are exceptions (or were so at the beginning of the war) none can doubt.

When a great nation, overgrown with the mosses of peace, is stirred and shaken, like a huge rock on the way-side, we all know what squirming, slimy things run forth helter-skelter; how they wriggle and reach and burrow; how nimble and eager and greedy they are; and how they fatten on the disturbed *débris*. But when the sunshine peers in among them, and freshening winds play about the old foundation, these slimy things soon disappear amid the chirp and hum of a better activity. This sunny-breezy state of things is now prevailing at the North; but there are crowded graves east and west—in the Shenandoah Valley, on the green banks of the Potomac, and the sunny slopes of Virginia—on which the Shoddy contractors dare not look; and homes, the very atmosphere of which should stifle them.

If there are Shoddy sinners, there are also Shoddy saints; men who, having committed no wrong, find themselves suddenly very "well off:" contractors, too, some of them, who fulfil their part like good Christians, and strange to say, make money by that same. A certain class of lucky inventors, inspired speculators, sudden-rise-of-property men, and men who have "struck oil" or gambled successfully in stocks, make up the rest of the ranks of Shoddy; and strange, motley ranks they are, swelled by the consequences and requirements of the Civil War into a formidable body indeed.

Shoddy has its shibboleth, but it is difficult to detect it amid the din of the times. It is *en mascarade*, and therefore not always easily recognized. It has changes of surface like the chameleon, and stages of development rivalling the wonders of the polliwig. It can darken the very air around, and yet, like Peter Schlenil, it has far more "substance" than shadow. Full of mysteries and contradictions, how shall we detect it?

Shoddy minces its words with anxious affectation; Shoddy pours forth slang with a recklessness unparalleled. Shoddy carelessly jingles its wealth and invites mankind to come and see; Shoddy clutches its gains with the sleepless vigilance of the miser. Villanous Shoddy rises to a foam of sparkling benevolence; virtuous Shoddy, like the rat in the fable, preaches industry to the starving, from a pulpit of cheese. Shoddy sinners doze in the best pews on Sunday; Shoddy saints stay at home, paralysed by their sudden good fortune. Shoddy merchants stand well

"on the street;" and Shoddy merchants dodge the sheriff round the corner. In fact, there is scarcely a form of human antithesis in which this same Shoddy does not shine supreme: and we in turn bemoan it, laugh at it, despise it, envy it, insult it, and flatter it. We warn our children against its example, and sedulously emulate its display in our own humble manner. We cry, "Lord, be merciful unto these miserable sinners," even while we long to be able, in some mysterious and consecrated way, to go and do likewise. We sneer at Mrs. O'Flaggerty's immense diamond, and conceive an intense dissatisfaction concerning the "mean little stone" that once had power to gladden our hearts. In fact I am afraid, if Shoddy be absurd we are foolish; if Shoddy be sinful we are without charity; but let that pass—what we have to deal with now is the serpent itself, not the community that, "charmed" and scotching by turns, is in danger of writhing within its folds.

Nothing could be a greater mistake than to consider Shoddy as an invariable synonym for recently acquired riches. Men are frequently to be found who cast no reproach on sudden prosperity, but rather exalt good fortune by accepting it. These can hardly be called Shoddy, though their entire wealth come in a day. Neither, of course, can those be so classed who, by inheritance, fall from the bare limb of "good family" into the warm nest of plenty; nor those whose honest gains, long withheld, are unexpectedly rendered to them *en masse*. The lines are wire-drawn, and yet the practical distinction to a close observer is as broad as the day.

When you see, as I have seen, a coarse-visaged, angular female, dressed—or rather covered—in the very extreme of the mode, weighted with velvet, silk, and sparkling jewels, and hear her exclaim, "Lor! expense ain't no manner of consequence to us!" you will undoubtedly detect a taint of Shoddy in the air. When you hear an "honored citizen" boasting, in bad English, of his well-known wealth and general can't-be-beat-iveness, you will know that Shoddy is not far away. When you enter a magnificent mansion, redolent of newness and fashion, and search in vain, amid the gorgeous upholstery, showy frescoes, and mongrel adornment, for the trailing home-flowers of elegance and repose, be sure that 'Shoddy' is written on the wall.

Sometimes a mere glance, or tone, or footfall, will betray the presence of Shoddy, or a comment on life, science, art, music, or literature will proclaim it as from the house-top, though you may have passed its legions, unaware, in the street. In brief, to really comprehend Shoddy, you must see its home, hear its conversation, and observe its actions, note its tastes and desires and aspirations. Then, and not until then, you can say, "*This is Shoddy*"—"This is not Shoddy," with the force of a Delphic decision.

Meantime it may be gratifying to know that the deponent, having valiantly penetrated its recesses, can offer certain personal testimony which may be of interest. No matter how or why these glimpses were obtained. Enough to say, "I have been there to see."

Never shall I forget my first *entrée* into those hallowed precincts ! We were a party of four—two ladies and two gentlemen—who, in consequence of receiving a gold-lettered invitation to Mrs. G——'s grand reception, had on the appointed evening proceeded in state to her showy residence on the Fifth Avenue, New York—which avenue, by the way, is believed by "the Shoddy" to lead to heaven direct.

Our "dressing-room" experiences were peculiar, and suggestive of strange scenes to follow; but being, as we believed, well endowed with the repose of the Vere de Veres, we descended toward the scene of action, with a tranquil consciousness of being in every way equal to the occasion. At the very foot of the stairway we were accosted by no less personages than the hostess herself, and her "grown up" daughter. The latter looked pale and anxious; but the mother, gorgeous in an intensely blue silk, and a huge coronet of pink and purple artificial flowers, evidently felt no misgivings. Both stared at us unconditionally. Suddenly a light illumined the countenance of the elder lady, as she broke forth in a loud, emphatic tone—

"Well, I declare! Mrs. D. and Mr. E! How do you do? And Miss E.! glad to see you, I'm sure; but the lights and everything dazzles me so, I don't hardly *know* people. Miry, my dear, this is Mr. E. and Mrs. D., both kind friends of your Pa, and Mr. E.'s daughter." (Aside to me:) "*Who* did you say the other gentleman was? Oh, yes! Mr. Stevens! Glad to see *you*, sir, you may depend. *Young* gentlemen are *so* scarce. Couldn't hardly get up the party for it. The war, you see, takes the best of 'em off. Oh, excuse me—ha! ha! I didn't mean no offence! But every young gentleman at a party counts *one*—don't they, Miry?"

"Lor'! Ma!" simpered Miss G., blushing violently. Here Mr. Stevens, always superbly master of himself, gracefully hastened to the rescue, and in a moment Myra was laughing the girlish laugh which, thank heaven! even Shoddy cannot make unmusical.

"Dear me!" sighed the matron pathetically, without offering to allow us to pass into the drawing-rooms, "they've been pouring in thick as syrup all the evening! I'm so exhausted I can't hardly stand up."

Then followed a painful silence. Through the arched rosewood doorway we could see the gaily dressed throng within—a sea of blue, pink, and white, in which frantic creatures in black broadcloth and white neckties seemed to be insanely bobbing and whirling. Suddenly the music ceased. The waves heaved violently a moment, then parted like a Dead Sea, crested with gauze and gossamer, while an army of Israelites, bearing silver trays laden with ices, passed safely through the temporary opening.

"Gracious!" exclaimed the hostess at last, with an apologetic start, "I ought to take you in. Miry," she added, nodding her head sidewise toward us, as she spoke—"you must introduce them."

"Oh, mother," was the *soto voce* reply, "I can't do it—I feel too used up."



"Yes, you must"—very austere—"I shan't do it."

Instinctively our devoted band, feeling that this "introduction" was inevitable, glanced at each other to ascertain whether any especial peculiarity rendered us unpresentable; but we were faultless.

Myra pouted, and looked toward the animated sea aforesaid, as if contemplating a suicidal plunge.

"Myra Jane!" pursued the now irate mother, "do as I tell you, miss, and stop putting on airs!"

The refractory daughter was conquered. "Well, mother," she replied in a stage whisper, "I'll do it all together, but I can't introduce 'em *separate*."

Thus encouraged, we humbly followed the young lady, and after being presented in a most novel and remarkable manner to the staring mermaids and mermen, we found ourselves slowly drifting toward an anchorage in the glittering saloon.

Young faces were there, radiant with intense enjoyment; older faces, with a startled, puzzled look upon them, as though the unaccustomed scene wrought more anxiety than pleasure; hard faces varnished with a mastic smile; soft, uninterpretable faces which were either saintly or horribly vicious; and faces without any expression at all.

Meantime the violins, being "under treatment," were relieving themselves by sundry melancholy squeaks. Groups of gentlemen, who seemed to have recently been presented with their hands and feet, were making desperate efforts to appear at ease. Neglected dames were sublime in a wretched nonchalance. Portly individuals in watch-chains were glancing uneasily at matrons whose coiffures rivalled the Hanging Gardens of Babylon; and youths and maidens, all, apparently, more or less afflicted with the dance of St. Vitus, were chatting merrily together. Of these I cannot say that—

Their voices, low with fashion,  
Not with feeling, softly freighted  
All the air about the windows  
With elastic laughers sweet.

In truth—"an' pity 'tis, 'tis true"—shrill tones, positive guffaws, and giggling responses, rather predominated over the murmurs suggestive of a pleasant evening at the Lady Geraldine's; and when the music floated forth once more, there was a rush, among the dancers, for "places," that would have been quite impossible in the days—

When persons of fashion and taste,  
In dresses as stout as chain armour of old,  
The parties of Ranelagh graced.

Shall I describe the dancing or the dresses? No! it is enough to say of the former that I have seen nothing precisely like it elsewhere; nor can my imagination find its prototype in the revel of bacchante, faun, or fairy. It was not wholly ungraceful, nor at all unconventional. It was just Shoddy, simple, uncompromising Shoddy, as foreign in its fulness to the New York of four years ago as the dance of Eastern Hour, or South

Sea Islander. Of the dresses there might be much to say, were this a fashion article, or a low-tariff essay bearing upon foreign importations. As it is neither, I will simply affirm that, with but a few exceptions, bad taste and money seemed to have vied with each other as to whose power should predominate.

We had quite lost sight of our amiable hostess, and were contemplating a dignified retreat to the dressing-rooms above, when we saw that lady bearing toward us under full sail. There were costly laces floating about her expansive shoulders, and glittering bracelets upon her roseate arms: still there was something so grotesque in her manner and appearance that we were forced to risk the Scylla of an alarming gravity, in order not to fall into the Charybdis of an uncontrollable smile. A pang of rebuke smote me, however, when her ladyship, in a tone of genuine interest, whispered,—

"You look kind o' lonesome, Mrs. D.; 'fraid you ain't enjoyin' yourself?"

"Oh, yes, indeed," I answered, with the ardent imbecility with which persons usually perpetrate social fibs.

"Ain't you danced?" (with a look that said, "If people dare to slight you here, just let me know.")

"Thank you! I really would prefer ——"

"Nonsense! Come along! I ain't a-going to have no wall-flowers in *this* company. I want to introduce you to a gentleman from Washington—monstrous rich!" (she added in an intense whisper) "made a hundred and ninety-five thousand dollars in the last two months!"

It was in vain to resist. I remember a huge Titan in dancing-master attire—a flabby, villanous countenance—diamonds flashing from the centre of a wall of ruffled linen—an atmosphere heavy with pomade—and an avalanche of "excuse me marms" following sundry accidents to my attire, and innumerable heartrending desertions and escapades during the progress of "The Lancers." Beyond this my impressions are vague and unsatisfactory. In fact, there are many things connected with the occasion that I would "willingly let die," not excepting the monstrous rich gentleman himself.

Before the evening was over, I found myself in a smaller apartment, gorgeously furnished and rendered truly remarkable by the abominable showily-framed paintings which nearly covered the walls. A human quartette was seated upon the sofa, à la Kenwig, and it needed no second look to convince me that I saw the four children of our hostess. Feminine treble and masculine base were represented there in equal parts, but that effect was purely a matter of faith, as nothing in their faces betrayed that they had ever uttered a sound.

Soon the mother appeared. "Lor'! Mrs. D., you here? Well, I had to get out of the parlors for a *minnit*—it's so suffocating there. *This* is our family setting-room. Ellen, stick in your shoulder, miss!" (This last was a dramatic aside directed to the sofa department). "I see you're



looking at the paintin's. Well, we *have* got *lots* of them, that's certain. I tell Mr. G. we'll have a picture-gallery before we know it—ha! ha!—but that's nothing—for the man's bound to have everything that money can buy —”

(Here a radiant, satisfied ripple of expression ran across the quartette upon the sofa).

I tried to say something, but alas! the allusion to the possible art-gallery had jeopardized my gravity to such an extent that I could only cough pathetically.

“This 'ere big picture,” pursued Mrs. G., “is a *landscape*—a *landscape* by—children! who is this *landscape* by?”

“Mr. Benson,” they all answered in a breath, closing their mouths instantly like four traps.

“Yes, Mr. Benson. He's a Western man, Mrs. D., and don't charge more'n a quarter what these New York painters ask. He paints pretty, tho'. Ain't that white fence *too* natural?” she added, letting her head drop sideways with its weight of admiration.

Alas, the fence *was* too natural, but I did not trust myself to say so. I merely bowed and stared vacantly at an ideal work representing, as I suspected, Cupid and Psyche, since the blue damsel depicted therein balanced a huge butterfly upon her shoulder, and her youthful companion had the inevitable wings and quiver of the mischievous God of Love.

“*That* picture,” broke forth Mrs. G., standing in superb disdain beside me, “ain't *my* taste—Mr. G. bought it. It's a fancy piece you see—Cupid and—children! what did your Pa say was the name of this picture?”

“Cupid and *Per-sitch*!” answered the two elder ones simultaneously.

“Oh, yes, Cupid and *Persitch*. But, Mrs. D., you must look at our portraits—we've had one artist for a year past doing all our family. Here's Mr. G. and me. You *may* think the yellow gloves in my picture ain't mates—any one might—but they are—the artist was bound to put one of them “in shadder,” in spite of all *I* could say. This is Dan'el's picture (sit up strait, Dan'el, and let go your sister's sash); it's like him, all but the hair. The naughty boy” (looking severely at Daniel) “burnt off one side of his curls last week, and we had to cut off the rest. Here's our youngest, Tommy—the end one on the sofa there—most beautiful boy! Always just as sassy and lively as you see him in the picture—*ain't* it like him, Mrs. D.?” And, following the example of Lord Chatham, on a certain well-known occasion, Mrs. G. “paused for a reply.”

Shade of Polonius, pity me! Tommy was a blue, moist-skinned little fellow, who looked as if he were in a state of chronic-somnambulism. What could I do but falter, “Very like,” without venturing to take a second look at the original?

“Mr. Benson said he never seen a harder child to paint,” resumed Mrs. G.; “it was so difficult to get his expression.” (Alack! I should think it would have been *very* difficult.) “He took him at first with only one shoe on, and the other layin' on the carpet; but I wasn't going to

have a child of mine lookin' like that: so I made Mr. Benson alter it quick. I told him to just change the shoe on the carpet to a kitten, or something of that kind, and then to put good Balmorals on the poor child. It's bad enough to have your young ones looking like wild about the house, without having their likeness took all in a muss! This is Katy."

(At this moment I saw, with a mingled feeling of mirth and apprehension, Mr. Stevens and Miss E. enter the "setting-room.")

"I had Ellen, here," continued Mrs. G. (halting before a remarkably pigeon-breasted specimen of high art), "taken correct in everything but her chest. I ordered Mr. Benson to make that high, because the poor child is so awful flat that it would only worry her father and me to see it hangin' before us all the time. Besides, Ellen's going to Dr. Lewis's what-you-call-it? Children! what's the name of Dr. Lewis's place?"

"Gym-naz-jum!" replied the sofa, promptly.

"Ah, yes, gym-naz-jum, that's it. Well, she's going there reg'lar after this, and Dr. Lewis says it'll soon fetch her chest out perfect."

Oh! the agony, to me, of this protracted interview—the consciousness of being watched by that unpitiful, fun-loving pair—the convulsive laughter deep in my very heart as my good-natured chaperon led me from one masterpiece of artistic abomination to another! There were a few other persons in the apartment, all speaking at once, their voices mingling strangely with the rise and fall of the music surging through the mansion—but I dared not look upon them as the irrepressible mother talked on.

"Here is something now that you *must* see" (pointing to an execrably painted waterfall, resembling a combination of green calves'-foot jelly and gingerbread). "*This* picture is my daughter Miry's work—ain't it beautiful? but do you know, her *real* talent is *figger-paintin'*—that's her talent! I showed Mr. Benson (the one that does all our pictures, except the frames—they come from Gonpil's)—I showed him *this* picture, and told him that Miry's teacher said she had great talent for painting, and, says he, 'Madam, if your daughter *has* a talent for art, it *must* be for figger-paintin'—he told me just from looking at that waterfall!' she added, triumphantly.

It is possible that by this time my expression had become idiotic, or, at least, blank. Mrs. G. evidently felt that further elucidation was required.

"*Figger-paintin'*," she continued, raising her voice to a didactic pitch, "is paintin' of figgers and animals, you know; that's what the artists call it—*figger-paintin'*"—laying down the information with a patronizing emphasis.

"Ah!" I ventured.

"Yes, Mr. Benson, being a painter, could put his finger right on Miry's talent—it *must* be, madam,' says he, 'it *must* be it's——' heavens! Ellen Ann! catch Dan'el!"

This startling peroration was caused by an eccentric movement of the child Daniel, who, having fallen asleep, upright, upon the sofa, was

announcing, by a preliminary pantomime, his intention of shortly precipitating himself upon the floor. Fortunately, Ellen Ann was equal to the emergency. "Dan'el's" precious nose was saved, and the youth restored to partial wakefulness by means of a brisk maternal shaking.

"Gracious!" exclaimed Mrs. G., becoming suddenly conscious that, though art may be "long, time is fleeting," "I ought to be in the parlor with the company. What *will* folks think of me? Dear me! what a bother!" So saying, the lady vanished in a glimmer of blue, purple, and pink.

Those last significant words were echoed in my brain again and again that night, during the wakeful hours that followed my introduction into "Shoddy" society. Poor Mrs. G.! what will folks think of her? What a bother! what a bother!

A full and faithful record of the manners and customs of Shoddy—of its histories, thoughts, feelings, and deeds—would constitute in bulk a formidable rival to the completed catalogue of the British Museum. We have had space to afford but a glance into the home of one of the lucky "peddlers." As for the "tailors," with their fleet-winged geese, "we could, an' if we would," tell much of them—but meantime the genii of the lamp are waiting. We must move onward. Come with me to the chief domain of the great uncle magician, he who fills the thousand lamps which Aladdins uncounted are now rubbing in bewildered delight. You will be surprised to learn what a noisy, dirty, crazy-looking place it is.\* The good old Quaker who named the State which encloses it would lift his hands in horror at the sight. Squalid and tumbled-down, yet at the same time a very wilderness of newness, with its swarming population, with its sheds, hovels, improvised hotels, and unsightly new houses, it appears to have been conjured by the magician during a severe fit of nightmare. For miles and miles, crowds of derricks rear their heads in every direction. Engines, bound to the spot, are puffing and labouring—engines, on distant rail-tracks, screeching beneath an invisible lash as they hurry away with their burdens, and huge blackened reservoirs are pouring forth torrents of wealth. Near by are the bluffs, sitting like Memnons guarding the rivers of oil beneath. Big with the secrets of ages, they lean forward as if humanity had at last awakened their interest. Sometimes a great tongue of flame darting upward, as if to lap coolness from the clouds, tells us that an oil-spring has been accidentally set on fire. Miles of carts, groaning like living things, wriggle their way through the heavy mud, led on by patient horses and swearing men. Women in motley attire, anxious to buy impossible wares, run out to meet the occasional dray of the itinerant grocer or market-man. Dirty boys, with the flutter of possible wealth in their rags, bully the scions of "recent arrivals," or anxiously hang around "dad" as he sinks the great shaft "on shares" with McConnaky. Truly "Oil Creek" presents a strange

---

\* Oil Creek, Venango Co., Pennsylvania.

scene, and all its wildness and oddity culminates in its metropolis—an hour-conjured city, jutting everywhere with contrarities. Desolate and crowded, neglected and thriving, abject and enterprising, ruinous in aspect, yet grand with invisible golden domes, is Oil City—and above and around all floats the breath of the great magician, stifling and nauseous to unconverted mortals, yet like a glorious incense to the pilgrims who bow down and worship him.

Verily the city is worthy of its name. Everything is oil. The one long, crooked, bottomless street glistens black with an amiable admixture of mud and oil. The shanties and houses are oily. Oily derricks stand in the back yards; and men with their thousands "in bank" walk the oily planked side-walk in garments covered with oil. Oil-boats, laden with oil, float sleekly past on the oil-covered river. Even the dogs and horses are oily; and the little fish, crowding under the oily shore, find themselves pickled like sardines before they know it. There are oily shops where the very wrapping-paper breaks out in transparent eruptions, and oily banks, attended by oily cashiers, where oily money is deposited as the product of oil. There is oil in the very atmosphere you breathe, oil in the water you drink, and a mysterious unction about your daily fare. The inhabitants "talk oil," too, until your senses are in danger of slipping away from you. Then, again, oil is the one great social leveller. Good "blood" is at a discount, and a derrick can lift to the plane of the highest. Your teamster yesterday may be your Rothschild to-day; and your neighbour, no matter how detestably vulgar in speech and manner he may be, can snub you with a successful "drill." If he has "struck oil," and you have not, local ethics will exalt him, and defy you to prove your superiority.

This is the head-quarters of the great magician. Of course, like other magicians, he has been for ages popping up in all sorts of unexpected places, but it was here that he first touched the rock for the benefit of modern Aladdins. They were rough, homespun fellows, ignorant and wretchedly poor, for their lands had barely yielded a subsistence. One would have thought them just the men to venture desperately into the jewelled cave. But no; "ready cash" was too tempting. Nearly every man of them sold his lamp to the highest bidder, and left for more fertile quarters. Consequently the genii of wealth and enterprise were soon, as all the world knows, serving new masters.

One of these Aladdins, however, had an adopted mother, a shrewd old soul whom we will call the widow McGannon—catch her selling the lamp! No, she rubbed it, and rubbed it, and every day the genii brought her, first gold, then "green backs;" she stowed the treasure away in every nook and cranny of her tumble-down shanty, until it could hide no more. This was all very well. But, one day, the old lady was trying to light her fire; the rusty stove had been troublesome of late, harbouring some spite, it seemed, to the green wood that had been cast aside in loading rafts for Pittsburgh. This day there was a great spluttering and

hissing when the wood went in, but no blaze. In her dilemma the old lady poured, from a bucket, some of the great magician's oil upon it, when presto! the demons of flame sprang forth! In vain the widow McGannon screamed and struggled—they never let go their wreathing hold upon her until she and her money were parted for ever!

To descend to more literal English, this old lady had recently drawn a will making her adopted son Tommy sole heir. For fifteen years past the young gentleman had been content to do odd jobs in the village, diverting himself in the meantime with toad-sticking and "making of little mud pies;" now he collected the treasure so carefully hidden behind board, rafter, and beam, and proceeded to investigate his affairs in earnest.

Half of the original farm had been sold by the widow at the commencement of the oil fever. The remainder she had prudently divided, and leased, on shares, to different "companies," with the agreement that she should receive half of the oil obtained. By this time the yield was prodigious. The ragged, ignorant country boy became at once a millionaire, with an additional income variously estimated to be from *three to six thousand dollars a day!*

Those who remember Malvolio cross-gartered cannot wonder that the widow McGannon's heir should feel inclined to make, in Shoddy phrase, somewhat of a "splurge" on the occasion of his sudden good fortune. Why not? Young men do not fall every day into fields yellow with real golden buttercups. Besides, Tommy was good-hearted and generous; and, since the roots were sure to bloom again, he scattered the buttercups in every direction.

As may be supposed, Thomas lost no time in "seeing the world;" wherever he went, tales of his queer ways and startling expenditure split the ears of the groundlings. To hire the grandest suite of apartments of the leading hotels as he passed along, to entertain his acquaintances, intimate and casual, with princely munificence while he stayed, and when he left for an absence of a month or two, retain the rooms, with directions that any of his "friends" who might arrive in the meantime should be "made comfortable" at his expense—was said to be but a small item in his "sensation" movements. There were rumours that when he patronized the theatres (eschewing private boxes as "too confin'") he secured a dozen seats, in order to have room to "spread himself," as he said; but I record this eccentricity with mental reservations.

Certain it is, however, that on one occasion, while visiting one of the large Western cities (Chicago, I believe), he directed his friends to obtain for him "a prime bang turn-out," which means a carriage and two or more steeds to draw it. Soon he became sole proprietor of a "five-thousand-dollar team," with equipage to correspond. Now Tommy was glorious! Never a young man rode more incessantly before nor since. His "team" seemed destined to solve the problem of perpetual motion. Half the time the gaping bystanders could not decide whether they witnessed a pleasure-ride or a "runaway."

But what youth of spirit could be expected to derive satisfaction for ever from any one mundane thing—even a “turn-out?” At the expiration of a fortnight, Tommy’s coachman, after vainly waiting two days for orders from “the boss,” presented himself before his employer in person.

Our Aladdin was lounging in an elegant apartment, moodily nibbling a cigar. Perhaps he had grown tired of “fun;” or it may be, he was thinking of a kind voice that the flame-demons had stilled. At all events, he was meditative.

The man coughed and said “Yer honer” twice, before Tommy looked up, with a gruff—“Hey? what do you want *now*? Who are you?”

“John, sir—the coachman, sir. Did you want the carriage brought round to-day, sir?”

“No. I’m going off in half-an-hour—going east.”

“Goin’, sir! An’ will I be stoppin’ wid you any longer, sir?”

“No. I s’pose not. Here, take this. That ’ll square us.”

“Thank’ee, sir. Sure that’s good pay, sir. But, if I may make so bold, what’s to be done wid the horses, sir? Is it kept at Williams’s they’ll be, yer honer?”

“The hosses! Oh, I don’t want ’em no longer. I’m going off for good in a few minnits.” And Tommy, quietly puffing his cigar, consulted an enormous gold watch.

“But, yer honer——”

“Oh! go ’long with you. I don’t *want* the team, I tell you. Take ’em and keep ’em—kill ’em or do what you please with ’em—only clear out.”

“Be the Lord, sir! and is it *kape* the craytures *meself* you’re sayin’?”

Tommy nodded, gave another puff, and pointed to the door. “Yes, take ’em, carriage and all, and go about your business.”

One day, when Tommy was “doing” New York, he strode into Tiffany’s magnificent jewellery establishment on Broadway, and startled the assembled salesmen with a loud—“Show us a dimond!”

“Here is one, sir,” responded an elegantly modulated voice from the “diamond department.” “Eighty dollars, sir.”

“Pooh! not such a speck as that! Something bigger!”

“Allow me to show you this; very pure stone, sir, one hundred and sixty dollars.”

“Nonsense—bigger!”

Herewith the gentlemanly salesman (whom I have always suspected to be a noble lord in difficulties) produced a brilliant of about the size of a small pea. “Exquisite stone, sir—first water—eight hundred.”

“Look here!” cried Tommy, becoming exasperated. “If you’ve got a reg’lar dimond, fetch it out; if you haven’t, just say so.”

My lord, half amused, half vexed, here, by way of totally annihilating his rough customer, brought out the Koh-i-noor of the place. “Will *this* suit you, sir?—moderately fine stone; price, fifteen thousand dollars!”

“Now you’re comin’ to it!” cried Tommy, decidedly mollified. “Is this the tip-top biggest?”



"It is, sir," replied his lordship coolly (stroking his beard at the same time as if to say, "Now, my rustic friend, I have wasted quite enough time upon you—you may go.")

"You ain't got nothin' bigger now?"

"Nothing, I assure you."

"Then I'll take it!"

My lord, I grieve to say, lost his presence of mind, and stared; but Thomas at once produced a huge roll of "green-backs"—counted out the money, and the sale was concluded.

This, as I have been told, occurred more than a year ago. Now, my lord, having become somewhat familiar with the ways and means of Shoddy, would scarcely lift his eyelids were his coal-heaver to propose to buy out the entire concern.

Not all the newly rich, however, allow their money to be seen among men. There are instances in the oil country, as it is called, of men who, a few months ago, were at least tranquil in their poverty, and are now suffering all the tortures of the miser. I know of one whose wealth has come upon him so fast as to literally overwhelm him. He is wretched with the mere weight of possession. The flowing wells upon his single acre are yielding him four thousand dollars, in currency, *daily*, as his share of the profits. He is afraid to trust to the banks; and Government bonds do not look enough like money to satisfy him. He must have gold. Consequently, as fast as his money pours in, he converts it into specie, and packs it in boxes and butter-firkins. These he buries in his cellar, each one, as he hides it away, leaving a corresponding weight of care in his weary heart. Nothing is added to his personal comforts, and matters of luxury are unthought of. His sole extra outlay is to hire a guard of twenty men, to watch his house night and day. A less number might suffice, but perhaps half of them are required to act as a check upon the others! Poor rich man! who would dream his dreams, or share his waking cares to be worth a million?

On the other hand, I can point out a lately hard-working rustic whom riches has truly blest. What a grand, startled, honest look beams from the man's face! A millionaire, he can hardly write his own name; but something tells one that when the first great wave of 'riches' surged through his heart, some noble thoughts, long buried under the sands of want and toil, were laid bare, thoughts that he will cherish reverently. They will tell him new things of humanity, of his own undeveloped powers. They will guide him with an unerring wisdom in training his sons and daughters. The satirists of Shoddy must bow to that man, and let him pass.

As a foil to the bright, contented spirits bubbling up on the surface of Oil-Creek prosperity, we have circulating thunder-gusts in the form of men who have invested largely in untried lands, and failed to realize their expectations. Forsaken wells are to be seen in every direction, with their derrick-monuments marking the spot where hope and cash lie buried

without a chance of resurrection. Not more black are the smoke-stacks, everywhere dotting the scene, than the looks of these men; and their talk is a mixture of gall and oil marvellous to hear. Sometimes a weary, patient gentleman is to be met, anxiously scanning the "operations," and asking questions of every clown and labourer he meets. He is an investigator, and he lacks what the Americans call "grit." You can see it in his eye. If he have not already lost his money "in oil," he will lose it very soon.

One of these heavy-hearted men was lately hastening along the plank sidewalk of Oil City, when he accidentally knocked over a half-starved-looking little girl whose tattered garments seemed to have long ago passed beyond the reach of soap.

"Oh, I beg your pardon! Are you hurt, my poor child?" he exclaimed, stooping to lift her.

"Go'long!" cried the girl, springing to her feet, and shaking down her rags with immense *hauteur*—"I ain't poor! Dad struck ile yesterday!"

We can imagine the wistful gaze that followed the child on her onward way.

It is instructive to watch the developments of would-be Shoddy. In the conflict of pride and cupidity the best part of the man is taken captive, literally falling into the hands of the enemy. Instructive, too, and sad, to note the trials and mortifications befalling the elect of Shoddy. Think of the chagrin of the new millionaire (or billionaire?) at Washington, when he read in the morning papers comments like this on his first grand ball:—"A truly magnificent affair; cost, it is estimated, \$100,000, which represents the exact profit on one hundred cannon, large numbers of which have been furnished the Government by this contractor."

Think of the weariness of the Shoddy lady who, ennuied with the superb house and uncongenial surroundings, said to a friend of mine—"Ah, it's all very fine, but my old friends kind o' stay 'way from me, and my new ones make fun of me, I know they do. Everything that money can buy I've got by the bushel, but I ain't happy, Miss Mary, I really ain't happy."

Study Shoddy while you may. It is a transient "aristocracy" at best. Soon its strong characteristics will be lost, its peculiarities worn away. Its like has never been on earth before. Remembering those ten remarkable years when speculation ran mad over Europe, when the South Sea bubble encompassed all England, and John Law ruled France with his Midas-promise and "dissolving views," it is safe to assert that the Shoddy of to-day stands without a parallel in human history. It is the one "new thing under the sun" not dreamt of by Solomon. America, in common with all Christendom, regards it with mingled feelings of disgust, amusement, and concern. "Where will it end?" is the question on every lip.

Verily it will end just where it began—in human nature itself. It is not more American, after all, than it is Adamite. That it has, for



the present, found "a local habitation and a name" in America is because nowhere else has nature so lavishly and unexpectedly poured forth her treasures among the people, or a national emergency arisen offering such unparalleled temptations both to individual enterprise and cupidity. And Shoddy has its mission. It will enable mankind to see more plainly than ever before the absurdity of pretence, the vulgarity of display, and the folly of imagining that money alone can ever make a gentleman. It will point a brazen finger, for all time, at imposture and treason, and the rottenness of the virtue that presents its fair side to individual men, but yields to temptation in dealing with governments and corporations. It will develop new necessities and new industries—bring a fresh, hardy element to society by educating new classes—open a channel through which the poor may receive a share of the refining influences which surround the rich—and, what is very important to America just now, it will put money in the national purse.

Large capitalists are needed in these days for vast enterprises, and Shoddy, with its bursting coffers, can furnish its quota of these. The Americo-Russian telegraph has its prospective message to Shoddy. The Pacific railroad is its humble servant. Other proposed public improvements beckon to it invitingly. Science, even, is pointing the way that Shoddy must go. From the north, south, east, west—wherever gold, oil, quicksilver, and coal lie buried—there is a call for Shoddy to come and grow richer still; and Shoddy will eagerly answer the summons. Just now when the nation is coming out of its struggle for life or death, when it requires fresh explorers and new resources to enable it to meet the tremendous demands that have been made upon it, Providence reveals these long-kept secrets, discloses these hidden stores, these illimitable reservoirs of wealth and—let us believe it—gives us Shoddy.

It may seem a strange whim to begin my argument with fairy-land and end it with Providence; but does not life itself so open and close? The magic delights of our childhood become recognized as God-given in our age. Our early wishes are for fairy benefits; our later prayers are for Divine blessings.

---

## Armada.

### BOOK THE THIRD.

#### CHAPTER X.

#### THE HOUSEMAID'S FACE.



ALL was quiet at Thorpe-Ambrose. The hall was solitary, the rooms were dark. The servants, waiting for the supper-hour in the garden at the back of the house, looked up at the clear heaven and the rising moon, and agreed that there was little prospect of the return of the picnic party until later in the night. The general opinion, led by the high authority of the cook, predicted that they might all sit down to supper without the least fear of being disturbed by the bell. Having arrived at this conclusion, the servants assembled round the table; and exactly at the moment when they sat down, the bell rang.

The footman, wondering, went upstairs to open the door, and found to his astonishment Midwinter waiting alone on the threshold, and looking (in the servant's opinion) miserably ill. He asked for a light, and, saying he wanted nothing else, withdrew at once to his room. The footman went back to his fellow-servants, and reported that something had certainly happened to his master's friend.

On entering his room, Midwinter closed the door, and hurriedly filled a bag with the necessaries for travelling. This done, he took from a locked drawer, and placed in the breast-pocket of his coat, some little presents which Allan had given to him—a cigar-case, a purse, and a set of studs in plain gold. Having possessed himself of these memorials, he



Miss Gwilt.

3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60  
61  
62  
63  
64  
65  
66  
67  
68  
69  
70  
71  
72  
73  
74  
75  
76  
77  
78  
79  
80  
81  
82  
83  
84  
85  
86  
87  
88  
89  
90  
91  
92  
93  
94  
95  
96  
97  
98  
99  
100

snatched up the bag, and laid his hand on the door. There, for the first time, he paused. There, the headlong haste of all his actions thus far suddenly ceased, and the hard despair in his face began to soften : he waited, with the door in his hand.

Up to that moment he had been conscious of but one motive that animated him, but one purpose that he was resolute to achieve. "For Allan's sake !" he had said to himself, when he looked back towards the fatal landscape and saw his friend leaving him to meet the woman at the pool. "For Allan's sake !" he had said again, when he crossed the open country beyond the wood, and saw afar, in the grey twilight, the long line of embankment and the distant glimmer of the railway lamps beckoning him away already to the iron road.

It was only when he now paused before he closed the door behind him—it was only when his own impetuous rapidity of action came for the first time to a check—that the nobler nature of the man rose in protest against the superstitious despair which was hurrying him from all that he held dear. His conviction of the terrible necessity of leaving Allan for Allan's good, had not been shaken for an instant since he had seen the first vision of the Dream realized on the shores of the Mere. But now, for the first time, his own heart rose against him in unanswerable rebuke. "Go, if you must and will ! but remember the time when you were ill, and he sat by your bedside ; friendless, and he opened his heart to you—and write, if you fear to speak ; write and ask him to forgive you, before you leave him for ever !"

The half-opened door closed again softly. Midwinter sat down at the writing-table and took up the pen. He tried again and again, and yet again, to write the farewell words ; he tried, till the floor all round him was littered with torn sheets of paper. Turn from them which way he would, the old times still came back and faced him reproachfully. The spacious bedchamber in which he sat, narrowed, in spite of him, to the sick usher's garret at the West-country inn. The kind hand that had once patted him on the shoulder, touched him again ; the kind voice that had cheered him, spoke unchangeably in the old friendly tones. He flung his arms on the table, and dropped his head on them in tearless despair. The parting words that his tongue was powerless to utter, his pen was powerless to write. Mercilessly in earnest, his superstition pointed to him to go while the time was his own ; mercilessly in earnest, his love for Allan held him back till the farewell plea for pardon and pity was written.

He rose with a sudden resolution, and rang for the servant. "When Mr. Armadale returns," he said, "ask him to excuse my coming downstairs, and say that I am trying to get to sleep." He locked the door and put out the light, and sat down alone in the darkness. "The night will keep us apart," he said ; "and time may help me to write. I may go in the early morning ; I may go while——" The thought died in him uncompleted ; and the sharp agony of the struggle forced to his lips the first cry of suffering that had escaped him yet.

He waited in the darkness. As the time stole on, his senses remained mechanically awake, but his mind began to sink slowly under the heavy strain that had now been laid on it for some hours past. A dull vacancy possessed him; he made no attempt to kindle the light and write once more. He never started; he never moved to the open window, when the first sound of approaching wheels broke in on the silence of the night. He heard the carriages draw up at the door; he heard the horses champing their bits; he heard the voices of Allan and young Pedgift on the steps—and still he sat quiet in the darkness, and still no interest was roused in him by the sounds that reached his ear from outside.

The voices remained audible after the carriages had been driven away; the two young men were evidently lingering on the steps before they took leave of each other. Every word they said reached Midwinter through the open window. Their one subject of conversation was the new governess. Allan's voice was loud in her praise. He had never passed such an hour of delight in his life as the hour he had spent with Miss Gwilt in the boat, on the way from Hurle Mere to the picnic party waiting at the other Broad. Agreeing, on his side, with all that his client said in praise of the charming stranger, young Pedgift appeared to treat the subject, when it fell into his hands, from a different point of view. Miss Gwilt's attractions had not so entirely absorbed his attention as to prevent him from noticing the impression which the new governess had produced on her employer and her pupil.

"There's a screw loose somewhere, sir, in Major Milroy's family," said the voice of young Pedgift. "Did you notice how the major and his daughter looked when Miss Gwilt made her excuses for being late at the Mere? You don't remember? Do you remember what Miss Gwilt said?"

"Something about Mrs. Milroy, wasn't it?" Allan rejoined.

Young Pedgift's voice dropped mysteriously a note lower.

"Miss Gwilt reached the cottage this afternoon, sir, at the time when I told you she would reach it, and she would have joined us at the time I told you she would come, but for Mrs. Milroy. Mrs. Milroy sent for her upstairs as soon as she entered the house, and kept her upstairs a good half hour and more. That was Miss Gwilt's excuse, Mr. Armadale, for being late at the Mere."

"Well, and what then?"

"You seem to forget, sir, what the whole neighbourhood has heard about Mrs. Milroy ever since the major first settled among us. We have all been told, on the doctor's own authority, that she is too great a sufferer to see strangers. Isn't it a little odd that she should have suddenly turned out well enough to see Miss Gwilt (in her husband's absence) the moment Miss Gwilt entered the house?"

"Not a bit of it! Of course she was anxious to make acquaintance with her daughter's governess."

"Likely enough, Mr. Armadale. But the major and Miss Neelie don't

see it in that light, at any rate. I had my eye on them both when the governess told them that Mrs. Milroy had sent for her. If ever I saw a girl look thoroughly frightened, Miss Milroy was that girl; and (if I may be allowed, in the strictest confidence, to libel a gallant soldier) I should say that the major himself was much in the same condition. Take my word for it, sir, there's something wrong upstairs in that pretty cottage of yours; and Miss Gwilt is mixed up in it already."

There was a minute of silence. When the voices were next heard by Midwinter, they were farther away from the house—Allan was probably accompanying young Pedgift a few steps on his way back.

After a while, Allan's voice was audible once more under the portico, making inquiries after his friend; answered by the servant's voice giving Midwinter's message. This brief interruption over, the silence was not broken again till the time came for shutting up the house. The servants' footsteps passing to and fro, the clang of closing doors, the barking of a disturbed dog in the stable-yard—these sounds warned Midwinter that it was getting late. He rose mechanically to kindle a light. But his head was giddy, his hand trembled—he laid aside the match-box, and returned to his chair. The conversation between Allan and young Pedgift had ceased to occupy his attention the instant he ceased to hear it; and now again, the sense that the precious time was failing him became a lost sense, as soon as the house noises which had awakened it had passed away. His energies of body and mind were both alike worn out; he waited with a stolid resignation for the trouble that was to come to him with the coming day.

An interval passed, and the silence was once more disturbed by voices outside; the voices of a man and a woman this time. The first few words exchanged between them indicated plainly enough a meeting of the clandestine kind; and revealed the man as one of the servants at Thorpe-Ambrose, and the woman as one of the servants at the cottage.

Here again, after the first greetings were over, the subject of the new governess became the all-absorbing subject of conversation. The woman was brimful of forebodings (inspired solely by Miss Gwilt's good looks), which she poured out irrepressibly on the man, try as he might to divert her to other topics. Sooner or later, let him mark her words, there would be an awful "upset" at the cottage. Her master, it might be mentioned in confidence, led a dreadful life with her mistress. The major was the best of men; he hadn't a thought in his heart beyond his daughter and his everlasting clock. But only let a nice-looking woman come near the place, and Mrs. Milroy was jealous of her—raging jealous, like a woman possessed, on that miserable sick-bed of hers. If Miss Gwilt (who was certainly good-looking, in spite of her hideous hair) didn't blow the fire into a flame before many days more were over their heads, the mistress was the mistress no longer, but somebody else. Whatever happened, the fault, this time, would lie at the door of the major's mother. The old lady and the mistress had had a dreadful quarrel two years



since; and the old lady had gone away in a fury, telling her son, before all the servants, that if he had a spark of spirit in him, he would never submit to his wife's temper as he did. It would be too much perhaps to accuse the major's mother of purposely picking out a handsome governess to spite the major's wife. But it might be safely said that the old lady was the last person in the world to humour the mistress's jealousy, by declining to engage a capable and respectable governess for her granddaughter, because that governess happened to be blessed with good looks. How it was all to end (except that it was certain to end badly) no human creature could say. Things were looking as black already as things well could. Miss Neelie was crying, after the day's pleasure (which was one bad sign); the mistress had found fault with nobody (which was another); the master had wished her good-night through the door (which was a third); and the governess had locked herself up in her room (which was the worst sign of all, for it looked as if she distrusted the servants). Thus the stream of the woman's gossip ran on, and thus it reached Midwinter's ears through the window, till the clock in the stable-yard struck, and stopped the talking. When the last vibrations of the bell had died away, the voices were not audible again, and the silence was broken no more.

Another interval passed, and Midwinter made a new effort to rouse himself. This time he kindled the light without hesitation, and took the pen in hand.

He wrote at the first trial with a sudden facility of expression, which, surprising him as he went on, ended in rousing in him some vague suspicion of himself. He left the table, and bathed his head and face in water, and came back to read what he had written. The language was barely intelligible—sentences were left unfinished; words were misplaced one for the other—every line recorded the protest of the weary brain against the merciless will that had forced it into action. Midwinter tore up the sheet of paper as he had torn up the other sheets before it—and sinking under the struggle at last, laid his weary head on the pillow. Almost on the instant, exhaustion overcame him; and before he could put the light out he fell asleep.

He was roused by a noise at the door. The sunlight was pouring into the room; the candle had burnt down into the socket; and the servant was waiting outside with a letter which had come for him by the morning's post.

"I ventured to disturb you, sir," said the man, when Midwinter opened the door, "because the letter is marked 'Immediate,' and I didn't know but it might be of some consequence."

Midwinter thanked him, and looked at the letter. It was of some consequence—the handwriting was Mr. Brock's.

He paused to collect his faculties. The torn sheets of paper on the floor recalled to him in a moment the position in which he stood. He locked the door again, in the fear that Allan might rise earlier than usual and come in to make inquiries. Then—feeling strangely little interest in

anything that the rector could write to him now—he opened Mr. Brock's letter, and read these lines:—

“Tuesday.

“MY DEAR MIDWINTER,—It is sometimes best to tell bad news plainly, in few words. Let me tell mine at once, in one sentence. My precautions have all been defeated: the woman has escaped me.

“This misfortune—for it is nothing less—happened yesterday (Monday). Between eleven and twelve in the forenoon of that day, the business which originally brought me to London obliged me to go to Doctors' Commons, and to leave my servant Robert to watch the house opposite our lodging until my return. About an hour and a half after my departure he observed an empty cab drawn up at the door of the house. Boxes and bags made their appearance first; they were followed by the woman herself, in the dress I had first seen her in. Having previously secured a cab, Robert traced her to the terminus of the North-Western Railway—saw her pass through the ticket-office—kept her in view till she reached the platform—and there, in the crowd and confusion caused by the starting of a large mixed train, lost her. I must do him the justice to say that he at once took the right course in this emergency. Instead of wasting time in searching for her on the platform, he looked along the line of carriages; and he positively declares that he failed to see her in any one of them. He admits, at the same time, that his search (conducted between two o'clock, when he lost sight of her, and ten minutes past, when the train started) was, in the confusion of the moment, necessarily an imperfect one. But this latter circumstance, in my opinion, matters little. I as firmly disbelieve in the woman's actual departure by that train as if I had searched every one of the carriages myself; and you, I have no doubt, will entirely agree with me.

“You now know how the disaster happened. Let us not waste time and words in lamenting it. The evil is done—and you and I together must find the way to remedy it.

“What I have accomplished already, on my side, may be told in two words. Any hesitation I might have previously felt at trusting this delicate business in strangers' hands, was at an end the moment I heard Robert's news. I went back at once to the city, and placed the whole matter confidentially before my lawyers. The conference was a long one; and when I left the office it was past the post-hour, or I should have written to you on Monday instead of writing to-day. My interview with the lawyers was not very encouraging. They warn me plainly that serious difficulties stand in the way of our recovering the lost trace. But they have promised to do their best; and we have decided on the course to be taken—excepting one point on which we totally differ. I must tell you what this difference is; for while business keeps me away from Thorpe-Ambrose, you are the only person whom I can trust to put my convictions to the test.

“The lawyers are of opinion, then, that the woman has been aware

from the first that I was watching her; that there is, consequently, no present hope of her being rash enough to appear personally at Thorpe-Ambrose; that any mischief she may have it in contemplation to do, will be done in the first instance by deputy; and that the only wise course for Allan's friends and guardians to take, is to wait passively till events enlighten them. My own idea is diametrically opposed to this. After what has happened at the railway, I cannot deny that the woman must have discovered that I was watching her. But she has no reason to suppose that she has not succeeded in deceiving me; and I firmly believe she is bold enough to take us by surprise, and to win, or force her way into Allan's confidence before we are prepared to prevent her. You and you only (while I am detained in London) can decide whether I am right or wrong—and you can do it in this way. Ascertain at once whether any woman who is a stranger in the neighbourhood has appeared since Monday last, at, or near, Thorpe-Ambrose. If any such person has been observed (and nobody escapes observation in the country), take the first opportunity you can get of seeing her, and ask yourself if her face does, or does not, answer certain plain questions which I am now about to write down for you. You may depend on my accuracy. I saw the woman unveiled on more than one occasion—and the last time through an excellent glass.

“1. Is her hair light brown, and (apparently) not very plentiful?  
2. Is her forehead high, narrow, and sloping backward from the brow?  
3. Are her eyebrows very faintly marked, and are her eyes small, and nearer dark than light—either grey or hazel (I have not seen her close enough to be certain which)?  
4. Is her nose aquiline?  
5. Are her lips thin, and is the upper lip long?  
6. Does her complexion look like an originally fair complexion, which has deteriorated into a dull, sickly paleness?  
7 (and lastly). Has she a retreating chin, and is there, on the left side of it, a mark of some kind—a mole or a scar, I can't say which?

“I add nothing about her expression, for you may see her under circumstances which may partially alter it as seen by me. Test her by her features, which no circumstances can change. If there is a stranger in the neighbourhood, and if her face answers my seven questions—you have found the woman! Go instantly, in that case, to the nearest lawyer, and pledge my name and credit for whatever expenses may be incurred in keeping her under inspection night and day. Having done this, take the speediest means of communicating with me; and whether my business is finished or not, I will start for Norfolk by the first train.

“In any event—whether you succeed or whether you fail in confirming my suspicions—write to me by return of post. If it is only to tell me that you have received my letter, write! I am suffering under anxiety and suspense, separated as I am from Allan, which you alone can relieve. Having said this, I know you well enough to feel sure that I need say no more.

“Always your friend,

“DECIMUS BROCK.”

Hardened by the fatalist conviction that now possessed him, Midwinter read the rector's confession of defeat from the first line to the last, without the slightest betrayal either of interest or surprise. The one part of the letter at which he looked back was the closing part of it. He read the last paragraph for the second time; and then waited for a moment, reflecting on it. "I owe much to Mr. Brock's kindness," he thought; "and I shall never see Mr. Brock again. It is useless and hopeless—but he asks me to do it, and it shall be done. A moment's look at her will be enough—a moment's look at her with his letter in my hand—and a line to tell him that the woman is here!"

Again he stood hesitating at the half-opened door; again, the cruel necessity of writing his farewell to Allan stopped him, and stared him in the face.

He looked aside doubtingly at the rector's letter. "I will write the two together," he said. "One may help the other." His face flushed deep as the words escaped him. He was conscious of doing, what he had not done yet—of voluntarily putting off the evil hour; of making Mr. Brock the pretext for gaining the last respite left, the respite of time.

The only sound that reached him through the open door was the sound of Allan stirring noisily in the next room. He stepped at once into the empty corridor; and, meeting no one on the stairs, made his way out of the house. The dread that his resolution to leave Allan might fail him, if he saw Allan again, was as vividly present to his mind in the morning as it had been all through the night. He drew a deep breath of relief as he descended the house steps—relief at having escaped the friendly greeting of the morning from the one human creature whom he loved!

He entered the shrubbery with Mr. Brock's letter in his hand, and took the nearest way that led to the major's cottage. Not the slightest recollection was in his mind of the talk which had found its way to his ears during the night. His one reason for determining to see the woman, was the reason which the rector had put in his mind. The one remembrance that now guided him to the place in which she lived, was the remembrance of Allan's exclamation when he first identified the governess with the figure at the pool.

Arrived at the gate of the cottage, he stopped. The thought struck him that he might defeat his own object if he looked at the rector's questions in the woman's presence. Her suspicions would be probably roused, in the first instance, by his asking to see her (as he had determined to ask, with or without an excuse); and the appearance of the letter in his hand might confirm them. She might defeat him by instantly leaving the room. Determined to fix the description in his mind first, and then to confront her, he opened the letter; and, turning away slowly by the side of the house, read the seven questions which he felt absolutely assured beforehand the woman's face would answer.

In the morning quiet of the park, slight noises travelled far. A slight noise disturbed Midwinter over the letter.

He looked up and found himself on the brink of a broad grassy trench, having the park on one side and the high laurel hedge of an enclosure on the other. The enclosure evidently surrounded the back garden of the cottage; and the trench was intended to protect it from being damaged by the cattle grazing in the park. Listening carefully as the slight sound which had disturbed him grew fainter, he recognized in it the rustling of women's dresses. A few paces ahead, the trench was crossed by a bridge (closed by a wicket-gate) which connected the garden with the park. He passed through the gate, crossed the bridge, and, opening a door at the other end, found himself in a summer-house, thickly covered with creepers, and commanding a full view of the garden from end to end.

He looked, and saw the figures of two ladies walking slowly away from him towards the cottage. The shorter of the two failed to occupy his attention for an instant—he never stopped to think whether she was, or was not, the major's daughter. His eyes were riveted on the other figure; the figure that moved over the garden walk with the long lightly-falling dress, and the easy seductive grace. There, presented exactly as he had seen her once already—there, with her back again turned on him, was the Woman at the pool!

There was a chance that they might take another turn in the garden—a turn back towards the summer-house. On that chance Midwinter waited. No consciousness of the intrusion that he was committing had stopped him at the door of the summer-house; and no consciousness of it troubled him even now. Every finer sensibility in his nature, sinking under the cruel laceration of the past night, had ceased to feel. The dogged resolution to do what he had come to do, was the one animating influence left alive in him. He acted, he even looked, as the most stolid man living might have acted and looked in his place. He was self-possessed enough, in the interval of expectation, before governess and pupil reached the end of the walk, to open Mr. Brook's letter, and to fortify his memory by a last look at the paragraph which described her face.

He was still absorbed over the description, when he heard the smooth rustle of the dresses travelling towards him again. Standing in the shadow of the summer-house, he waited while she lessened the distance between them. With her written portrait vividly impressed on his mind, and with the clear light of the morning to help him, his eyes questioned her as she came on; and these were the answers that her face gave him back.

The hair in the rector's description was light brown and not plentiful. This woman's hair, superbly luxuriant in its growth, was of the one unpardonably remarkable shade of colour which the prejudice of the Northern nations never entirely forgives—it was *red*! The forehead in the rector's description was high, narrow, and sloping backward from the brow; the eyebrows were faintly marked, and the eyes small, and in colour either grey or hazel. This woman's forehead was low, upright, and broad towards

the temples; her eyebrows, at once strongly and delicately marked, were a shade darker than her hair; her eyes, large, bright, and well-opened, were of that purely blue colour, without a tinge in it of grey or green, so often presented to our admiration in pictures and books, so rarely met with in the living face. The nose in the rector's description was aquiline. The line of this woman's nose bent neither outward nor inward: it was the straight delicately-moulded nose (with the short upper lip beneath) of the ancient statues and busts. The lips in the rector's description were thin, and the upper lip long; the complexion was of a dull sickly paleness; the chin retreating, and the mark of a mole or a scar on the left side of it. This woman's lips were full, rich, and sensual. Her complexion was the lovely complexion which accompanies such hair as hers—so delicately bright in its rosier tints, so warmly and softly white in its gentler gradations of colour on the forehead and the neck. Her chin, round and dimpled, was pure of the slightest blemish in every part of it, and perfectly in line with her forehead to the end. Nearer and nearer, and fairer and fairer she came, in the glow of the morning light—the most startling, the most unanswerable contradiction that eye could see, or mind conceive, to the description in the rector's letter.

Both governess and pupil were close to the summer-house before they looked that way, and noticed Midwinter standing inside. The governess saw him first.

"A friend of yours, Miss Milroy?" she asked quietly, without starting, or betraying any sign of surprise.

Neelie recognized him instantly. Prejudiced against Midwinter by his conduct when his friend had introduced him at the cottage, she now fairly detested him as the unlucky first cause of her misunderstanding with Allan at the picnic. Her face flushed, and she drew back from the summer-house with an expression of merciless surprise.

"He is a friend of Mr. Armadale's," she replied sharply. "I don't know what he wants, or why he is here."

"A friend of Mr. Armadale's!" The governess's face lit up with a suddenly-roused interest as she repeated the words. She returned Midwinter's look, still steadily fixed on her, with equal steadiness on her side.

"For my part," pursued Neelie, resenting Midwinter's insensibility to her presence on the scene, "I think it a great liberty to treat papa's garden as if it was the open park!"

The governess turned round, and gently interposed.

"My dear Miss Milroy," she remonstrated, "there are certain distinctions to be observed. This gentleman is a friend of Mr. Armadale's. You could hardly express yourself more strongly, if he was a perfect stranger."

"I express my opinion," retorted Neelie, chafing under the satirically indulgent tone in which the governess addressed her. "It's a matter of taste, Miss Gwilt; and tastes differ." She turned away petulantly, and walked back by herself to the cottage.



"She is very young," said Miss Gwilt, appealing with a smile to Midwinter's forbearance; "and, as you must see for yourself, sir, she is a spoilt child." She paused—showed, for an instant only, her surprise at Midwinter's strange silence and strange persistency in keeping his eyes still fixed on her—then set herself, with a charming grace and readiness, to help him out of the false position in which he stood. "As you have extended your walk thus far," she resumed, "perhaps you will kindly favour me, on your return, by taking a message to your friend? Mr. Armadale has been so good as to invite me to see the Thorpe-Ambrose gardens this morning. Will you say that Major Milroy permits me to accept the invitation (in company with Miss Milroy) between ten and eleven o'clock?" For a moment her eyes rested, with a renewed look of interest, on Midwinter's face. She waited, still in vain, for an answering word from him—smiled, as if his extraordinary silence amused rather than angered her—and followed her pupil back to the cottage.

It was only when the last trace of her had disappeared that Midwinter roused himself, and attempted to realize the position in which he stood. The revelation of her beauty was in no respect answerable for the breathless astonishment which had held him spell-bound up to this moment. The one clear impression she had produced on him thus far, began and ended with his discovery of the astounding contradiction that her face offered, in one feature after another, to the description in Mr. Brock's letter. All beyond this was vague and misty—a dim consciousness of a tall, elegant woman, and of kind words, modestly and gracefully spoken to him, and nothing more.

He advanced a few steps into the garden, without knowing why—stopped, glancing hither and thither like a man lost—recognized the summer-house by an effort, as if years had elapsed since he had seen it—and made his way out again, at last, into the park. Even here, he wandered first in one direction, then in another. His mind was still reeling under the shock that had fallen on it; his perceptions were all confused. Something kept him mechanically in action, walking eagerly without a motive, walking he knew not where.

A far less sensitively organized man might have been overwhelmed, as he was overwhelmed now, by the immense, the instantaneous revulsion of feeling which the event of the last few minutes had wrought in his mind.

At the memorable instant when he had opened the door of the summer-house, no confusing influence troubled his faculties. Right or wrong, in all that related to his position towards his friend, he had reached an absolutely definite conclusion, by an absolutely definite process of thought. The whole strength of the motive which had driven him into the resolution to part from Allan, rooted itself in the belief that he had seen at Hurl Mere the fatal fulfilment of the first Vision of the Dream. And this belief, in its turn, rested, necessarily, on the conviction that the woman who was the one survivor of the tragedy in Madeira, must be also inevi-



tably the woman whom he had seen standing in the Shadow's place at the pool. Firm in that persuasion, he had himself compared the object of his distrust and of the rector's distrust with the description written by the rector himself—a description, carefully minute, by a man entirely trustworthy—and his own eyes had informed him that the woman whom he had seen at the Mere, and the woman whom Mr. Brock had identified in London, were not one, but Two. In the place of the Dream-Shadow, there had stood, on the evidence of the rector's letter, not the instrument of the Fatality—but a stranger!

No such doubts as might have troubled a less superstitious man, were started in *his* mind by the discovery that had now opened on him.

It never occurred to him to ask himself, whether a stranger might not be the appointed instrument of the Fatality, now when the letter had persuaded him that a stranger had been revealed as the figure in the dream-landscape. No such idea entered, or could enter, his mind. The one woman, whom *his* superstition dreaded, was the woman who had entwined herself with the lives of the two Armadales in the first generation, and with the fortunes of the two Armadales in the second—who was at once the marked object of his father's death-bed warning, and the first cause of the family calamities which had opened Allan's way to the Thorpe-Ambrose estate—the woman, in a word, whom he would have known instinctively, but for Mr. Brock's letter, to be the woman whom he had now actually seen.

Looking at events as they had just happened, under the influence of the misapprehension into which the rector had innocently misled him, his mind saw and seized its new conclusion instantaneously; acting precisely as it had acted in the past time of his interview with Mr. Brock at the Isle of Man.

Exactly as he had once declared it to be an all-sufficient refutation of the idea of the Fatality; that he had never met with the timber-ship in any of his voyages at sea—so he now seized on the similarly-derived conclusion, that the whole claim of the Dream to a supernatural origin stood self-refuted by the disclosure of a stranger in the Shadow's place. Once started from this point—once encouraged to let his love for Allan influence him undividedly again—his mind hurried along the whole resulting chain of thought at lightning speed. If the Dream was proved to be no longer a warning from the other world, it followed, inevitably, that accident and not fate had led the way to the night on the Wreck, and that all the events which had happened since Allan and he had parted from Mr. Brock, were events in themselves harmless, which his superstition had distorted from their proper shape. In less than a moment, his mobile imagination had taken him back to the morning at Castletown when he had revealed to the rector the secret of his name; when he had declared to the rector, with his father's letter before his eyes, the better faith that was in him. Now once more, he felt his heart holding firmly by the bond of brotherhood between Allan and

himself; now once more he could say with the eager sincerity of the old time, "If the thought of leaving him breaks my heart, the thought of leaving him is wrong!" As that nobler conviction possessed itself again of his mind—quieting the tumult, clearing the confusion within him—the house at Thorpe-Ambrose, with Allan on the steps, waiting and looking for him, opened on his eyes through the trees. A sense of illimitable relief lifted his eager spirit high above the cares, and doubts, and fears that had oppressed it so long; and showed him once more the better and brighter future of his early dreams. His eyes filled with tears, and he pressed the rector's letter, in his wild passionate way to his lips, as he looked at Allan through the vista of the trees. "But for this morsel of paper," he thought, "my life might have been one long sorrow to me, and my father's crime might have parted us for ever!"

Such was the result of the stratagem which had shown the housemaid's face to Mr. Brock as the face of Miss Gwilt. And so—by shaking Midwinter's trust in his own superstition, in the one case in which that superstition pointed to the truth—did Mother Oldershaw's cunning triumph over difficulties and dangers, which had never been contemplated by Mother Oldershaw herself.

---

## CHAPTER XI.

### MISS GWILT AMONG THE QUICKSANDS.

#### 1.—*From the Reverend Decimus Brock to Ozias Midwinter.*

"Thursday.

"MY DEAR MIDWINTER,—No words can tell what a relief it was to me to get your letter this morning, and what a happiness I honestly feel in having been, thus far, proved to be in the wrong. The precautions you have taken in case the woman should still confirm my apprehensions by venturing herself at Thorpe-Ambrose, seem to me to be all that can be desired. You are no doubt sure to hear of her from one or other of the people in the lawyer's office, whom you have asked to inform you of the appearance of a stranger in the town.

"I am the more pleased at finding how entirely I can trust you in this matter—for I am likely to be obliged to leave Allan's interests longer than I supposed solely in your hands. My visit to Thorpe-Ambrose must, I regret to say, be deferred for two months. The only one of my brother-clergymen in London, who is able to take my duty for me, cannot make it convenient to remove with his family to Somersetshire before that time. I have no alternative but to finish my business here, and be back at my rectory on Saturday next. If anything happens, you will of course instantly communicate with me—and, in that case, be the inconvenience what it may, I must leave home for Thorpe-Ambrose. If, on the other hand, all goes more smoothly than my own obstinate apprehensions will allow

me to suppose, then Allan (to whom I have written) must not expect to see me till this day two months.

"No result has, up to this time, rewarded our exertions to recover the trace lost at the railway. I will keep my letter open, however, until post-time, in case the next few hours bring any news.

"Always truly yours,

"DECIMUS BROCK."

"P.S.—I have just heard from the lawyers'. They have found out the name the woman passed by in London. If this discovery (not a very important one, I am afraid,) suggests any new course of proceeding to you, pray act on it at once. The name is—Miss Gwilt."

2.—*From Miss Gwilt to Mrs. Oldershaw.*

"The Cottage, Thorpe-Ambrose,

"Saturday, June 28th.

"If you will promise not to be alarmed, Mamma Oldershaw, I will begin this letter in a very odd way, by copying a page of a letter written by somebody else. You have an excellent memory, and you may not have forgotten that I received a note from Major Milroy's mother (after she had engaged me as governess), on Monday last. It was dated and signed; and here it is, as far as the first page :—'June 28rd, 1851. Dear Madam,—Pray excuse my troubling you, before you go to Thorpe-Ambrose, with a word more about the habits observed in my son's household. When I had the pleasure of seeing you at two o'clock to-day, in Kingsdown Crescent, I had another appointment in a distant part of London at three; and, in the hurry of the moment, one or two little matters escaped me, which I think I ought to impress on your attention.' The rest of the letter is not of the slightest importance, but the lines that I have just copied, are well worthy of all the attention you can bestow on them. They have saved me from discovery, my dear, before I have been a week in Major Milroy's service !

"It happened no later than yesterday evening, and it began and ended in this manner,—

"There is a gentleman here (of whom I shall have more to say presently), who is an intimate friend of young Armadale's, and who bears the strange name of Midwinter. He contrived yesterday to speak to me alone in the park. Almost as soon as he opened his lips, I found that my name had been discovered in London (no doubt by the Somersetshire clergyman); and that Mr. Midwinter had been chosen (evidently by the same person) to identify the Miss Gwilt who had vanished from Brompton, with the Miss Gwilt who had appeared at Thorpe-Ambrose. You foresaw this danger, I remember; but you could scarcely have imagined that the exposure would threaten me so soon.

"I spare you the details of our conversation, to come to the end.

Mr. Midwinter put the matter very delicately, declaring, to my great surprise, that he felt quite certain himself, that I was not the Miss Gwilt of whom his friend was in search; and that he only acted as he did out of regard to the anxiety of a person whose wishes he was bound to respect. Would I assist him, in setting that anxiety completely at rest, so far as I was concerned, by kindly answering one plain question—which he had no other right to ask me than the right my indulgence might give him? The lost ‘Miss Gwilt’ had been missed on Monday last, at two o’clock, in the crowd on the platform of the North-Western Railway, in Euston Square. Would I authorize him to say, that on that day, and at that hour, the Miss Gwilt who was Major Milroy’s governess, had never been near the place?

“I need hardly tell you that I seized the fine opportunity he had given me of disarming all future suspicion. I took a high tone on the spot, and met him with the old lady’s letter. He politely refused to look at it. I insisted on his looking at it. ‘I don’t choose to be mistaken,’ I said, ‘for a woman who may be a bad character, because she happens to bear, or to have assumed, the same name as mine. I insist on your reading the first part of this letter for my satisfaction, if not for your own.’ He was obliged to comply—and there was the proof, in the old lady’s own handwriting, that at two o’clock on Monday last, she and I were together in Kingsdown Crescent, which any directory would tell him is a ‘crescent’ in Bayswater! I leave you to imagine his apologies, and the perfect sweetness with which I received them.

“I might, of course, if I had not preserved the letter, have referred him to you, or to the major’s mother with similar results. As it is, the object has been gained without trouble or delay. *I have been proved not to be myself*; and one of the many dangers that threatened me at Thorpe-Ambrose, is a danger blown over from this moment. Your housemaid’s face may not be a very handsome one; but there is no denying that it has done us excellent service.

“So much for the past; now for the future. You shall hear how I get on with the people about me; and you shall judge for yourself what the chances are, for and against my becoming mistress of Thorpe-Ambrose.

“Let me begin with young Armadale—because it is beginning with good news. I have produced the right impression on him already, and heaven knows *that* is nothing to boast of! Any moderately good-looking woman who chose to take the trouble, could make him fall in love with her. He is a rattle-pated young fool—one of those noisy, rosy, light-haired, good-tempered men, whom I particularly detest. I had a whole hour alone with him in a boat, the first day I came here, and I have made good use of my time, I can tell you, from that day to this. The only difficulty with him is the difficulty of concealing my own feelings—especially when he turns my dislike of him into downright hatred, by sometimes reminding me of his mother. I really never saw a man whom

I could use so ill, if I had the opportunity. He will give me the opportunity, I believe, if no accident happens, sooner than we calculated on. I have just returned from a party at the great house, in celebration of the rent-day dinner, and the squire's attentions to me, and my modest reluctance to receive them, have already excited general remark.

"My pupil, Miss Milroy, comes next. She too is rosy and foolish; and, what is more, awkward and squat and freckled and ill-tempered and ill-dressed. No fear of *her*, though she hates me like poison, which is a great comfort, for I get rid of her out of lesson-time and walking-time. It is perfectly easy to see that she has made the most of her opportunities with young Armadale (opportunities, by-the-by, which we never calculated on); and that she has been stupid enough to let him slip through her fingers. When I tell you that she is obliged, for the sake of appearances, to go with her father and me to the little entertainments at Thorpe-Ambrose, and to see how young Armadale admires me, you will understand the kind of place I hold in her affections. She would try me past all endurance, if I didn't see that I aggravate her by keeping my temper—so of course I keep it. If I do break out, it will be over our lessons—not over our French, our grammar, history, and globes—but over our music. No words can say how I feel for her poor piano. Half the musical girls in England ought to have their fingers chopped off, in the interests of society—and if I had my way, Miss Milroy's fingers should be executed first.

"As for the major, I can hardly stand higher in his estimation than I stand already. I am always ready to make his breakfast—and his daughter is not. I can always find things for him when he loses them—and his daughter can't. I never yawn when he poses—and his daughter does. I like the poor dear harmless old gentleman; so I won't say a word more about him.

"Well, here is a fair prospect for the future surely? My good Oldershaw, there never was a prospect yet, without an ugly place in it. *My* prospect has two ugly places in it. The name of one of them is, Mrs. Milroy; and the name of the other is, Mr. Midwinter.

"Mrs. Milroy first. Before I had been five minutes in the cottage, on the day of my arrival, what do you think she did? She sent down stairs, and asked to see me. The message startled me a little—after hearing from the old lady, in London, that her daughter-in-law was too great a sufferer to see anybody—but of course when I got her message, I had no choice but to go upstairs to the sick-room. I found her bedridden with an incurable spinal complaint, and a really horrible object to look at—but with all her wits about her; and, if I am not greatly mistaken, as deceitful a woman, with as vile a temper, as you could find anywhere, in all your long experience. Her excessive politeness, and her keeping her own face in the shade of the bed-curtains while she contrived to keep mine in the light, put me on my guard the moment I entered the room. We were more than half an hour together, without my stepping into any one of the

many clever little traps she laid for me. The only mystery in her behaviour, which I failed to see through at the time, was her perpetually asking me to bring her things (things she evidently did not want) from different parts of the room.

"Since then, events have enlightened me. My first suspicions were raised by overhearing some of the servants' gossip; and I have been confirmed in my opinion by the conduct of Mrs. Milroy's nurse. On the few occasions when I have happened to be alone with the major, the nurse has also happened to want something of her master, and has invariably forgotten to announce her appearance by knocking at the door. Do you understand now, why Mrs. Milroy sent for me the moment I got into the house, and what she wanted, when she kept me going backwards and forwards, first for one thing and then for another? There is hardly an attractive light in which my face and figure can be seen, in which that woman's jealous eyes have not studied them already. I am no longer puzzled to know why the father and daughter started, and looked at each other, when I was first presented to them—or why the servants still stare at me with a mischievous expectation in their eyes, when I ring the bell and ask them to do anything. It is useless to disguise the truth, Mother Oldershaw, between you and me. When I went upstairs into that sick-room, I marched blindfold into the clutches of a jealous woman. If Mrs. Milroy *can* turn me out of the house, Mrs. Milroy *will*—and, morning and night, she has nothing else to do in that bed-prison of hers but to find out the way.

"In this awkward position, my own cautious conduct is admirably seconded by the dear old major's perfect insensibility. His wife's jealousy of him is as monstrous a delusion as any that could be found in a mad-house—it is the growth of her own vile temper, under the aggravation of an incurable illness. The poor man hasn't a thought beyond his mechanical pursuits; and I don't believe he knows at this moment, whether I am a handsome woman or not. With this chance to help me, I may hope to set the nurse's intrusions and the mistress's contrivances at defiance—for a time, at any rate. But you know what a jealous woman is, and I think I know what Mrs. Milroy is; and I own I shall breathe more freely, on the day when young Armadale opens his foolish lips to some purpose, and sets the major advertising for a new governess.

"Armadale's name reminds me of Armadale's friend. There is more danger threatening in that quarter; and, what is worse, I don't feel half as well armed beforehand against Mr. Midwinter, as I do against Mrs. Milroy.

"Everything about this man is more or less mysterious, which I don't like to begin with. How does he come to be in the confidence of the Somersetshire clergyman? How much has that clergyman told him? How is it that he was so firmly persuaded, when he spoke to me in the park, that I was not the Miss Gwilt of whom his friend was in search? I haven't the ghost of an answer to give to any of those three questions.



I can't even discover who he is, or how he and young Armadale first became acquainted. I hate him. No, I don't; I only want to find out about him. He is very young—little and lean, and active and dark, with bright black eyes which say to me plainly, 'We belong to a man with brains in his head and a will of his own; a man who hasn't always been hanging about a country house, in attendance on a fool.' Yes; I am positively certain Mr. Midwinter has done something or suffered something, in his past life, young as he is; and I would give I don't know what to get at it. Don't resent my taking up so much space in writing about him. He has influence enough over young Armadale to be a very awkward obstacle in my way, unless I can secure his good opinion at starting.

"Well, you may ask, and what is to prevent your securing his good opinion? I am sadly afraid, Mother Oldershaw, I have got it on terms I never bargained for. I am sadly afraid the man is in love with me already.

"Don't toss your head, and say, 'Just like her vanity!' After the horrors I have gone through, I have no vanity left; and a man who admires me, is a man who makes me shudder. There was a time, I own—Pooh! what am I writing? Sentiment, I declare! Sentiment to *you*! Laugh away, my dear. As for me, I neither laugh nor cry; I mend my pen, and get on with my—what do the men call it?—my report.

"The only thing worth inquiring is, whether I am right or wrong in my idea of the impression I have made on him. Let me see—I have been four times in his company. The first time was in the major's garden, where we met unexpectedly, face to face. He stood looking at me, like a man petrified, without speaking a word. The effect of my horrid red hair, perhaps? Quite likely—let us lay it on my hair. The second time was in going over the Thorpe-Ambrose grounds, with young Armadale on one side of me, and my pupil (in the sulks) on the other. Out comes Mr. Midwinter to join us—though he had work to do in the steward's office, which he had never been known to neglect on any other occasion. Laziness, possibly? or an attachment to Miss Milroy? I can't say; we will lay it on Miss Milroy, if you like—I only know he did nothing but look at *me*. The third time was at the private interview in the park, which I have told you of already. I never saw a man so agitated at putting a delicate question to a woman in my life. But *that* might have been only awkwardness; and his perpetually looking back after me when we had parted, might have been only looking back at the view. Lay it on the view; by all means lay it on the view! The fourth time was this very evening, at the little party. They made me play; and, as the piano was a good one, I did my best. All the company crowded round me, and paid me their compliments (my charming pupil paid hers, with a face like a cat's, just before she spits), except Mr. Midwinter. *He* waited till it was time to go, and then he caught me alone for a moment in the hall. There



was just time for him to take my hand, and say two words. Shall I tell you *how* he took my hand, and what his voice sounded like when he spoke? Quite needless! You have always told me that the late Mr. Oldershaw doated on you. Just recall the first time he took your hand, and whispered a word or two addressed to your private ear. To what did you attribute his behaviour on that occasion? I have no doubt, if you had been playing on the piano in the course of the evening, you would have attributed it entirely to the music!

"No! you may take my word for it, the harm is done. *This* man is no rattle-pated fool, who changes his fancies as readily as he changes his clothes—the fire that lights those big black eyes of his, is not an easy fire, when a woman has once kindled it, for that woman to put out. I don't wish to discourage you; I don't say the chances are against us. But with Mrs. Milroy threatening me on one side, and Mr. Midwinter on the other, the worst of all risks to run, is the risk of losing time. Young Armadale has hinted already, as well as such a lout can hint, at a private interview! Miss Milroy's eyes are sharp, and the nurse's eyes are sharper; and I shall lose my place if they either of them find me out. No matter! I must take my chance, and give him the interview. Only let me get him alone, only let me escape the prying eyes of the women, and—if his friend doesn't come between us—I answer for the result!

"In the meantime, have I anything more to tell you? Are there any other people in our way at Thorpe-Ambrose? Not another creature! None of the resident families call here, young Armadale being, most fortunately, in bad odour in the neighbourhood. There are no handsome highly-bred women to come to the house, and no persons of consequence to protest against his attentions to a governess. The only guests he could collect at his party to-night were the lawyer and his family (a wife, a son, and two daughters), and a deaf old woman, and *her* son—all perfectly unimportant people, and all obedient humble servants of the stupid young squire.

"Talking of obedient humble servants, there is one other person established here, who is employed in the steward's office—a miserable, shabby, dilapidated old man, named Bashwood. He is a perfect stranger to me, and I am evidently a perfect stranger to him; for he has been asking the housemaid at the cottage who I am. It is paying no great compliment to myself to confess it; but it is not the less true that I produced the most extraordinary impression on this feeble old creature the first time he saw me. He turned all manner of colours, and stood trembling and staring at me, as if there was something perfectly frightful in my face. I felt quite startled for the moment,—for of all the ways in which men have looked at me, no man ever looked at me in that way before. Did you ever see the boa-constrictor fed at the Zoological Gardens? They put a live rabbit into his cage, and there is a moment when the two creatures look at each other. I declare Mr. Bashwood reminded me of the rabbit!

"Why do I mention this? I don't know why. Perhaps I have

been writing too long, and my head is beginning to fail me. Perhaps Mr. Bashwood's manner of admiring me strikes my fancy by its novelty. Absurd! I am exciting myself, and troubling you about nothing. Oh, what a weary, long letter I have written! and how brightly the stars look at me through the window—and how awfully quiet the night is! Send me some more of those sleeping drops, and write me one of your nice, wicked, amusing letters. You shall hear from me again as soon as I know a little better how it is all likely to end. Good night, and keep a corner in your stony old heart for

“ L. G.”

3.—*From Mrs. Oldershaw to Miss Gwilt.*

“ Diana Street, Pimlico, Monday.

“ MY DEAR LYDIA,—I am in no state of mind to write you an amusing letter. Your news is very discouraging, and the recklessness of your tone quite alarms me. Consider the money I have already advanced, and the interests we both have at stake. Whatever else you are, don't be reckless, for heaven's sake!

“ What can I do?—I ask myself, as a woman of business, what can I do to help you? I can't give you advice, for I am not on the spot, and I don't know how circumstances may alter from one day to another. Situated as we are now, I can only be useful in one way; I can discover a new obstacle that threatens you, and I think I can remove it.

“ You say, with great truth, that there never was a prospect yet without an ugly place in it, and that there are two ugly places in your prospect. My dear, there may be *three* ugly places, if I don't bestir myself to prevent it; and the name of the third place will be—Brock! Is it possible you can refer, as you have done, to the Somersetshire clergyman, and not see that the progress you make with young Armadale will be, sooner or later, reported to him by young Armadale's friend? Why, now I think of it, you are doubly at the parson's mercy! You are at the mercy of any fresh suspicion which may bring him into the neighbourhood himself at a day's notice; and you are at the mercy of his interference the moment he hears that the squire is committing himself with a neighbour's governess. If I can do nothing else, I can keep this additional difficulty out of your way. And, oh, Lydia, with what alacrity I shall exert myself, after the manner in which the old wretch insulted me when I told him that pitiable story in the street! I declare I tingle with pleasure at this new prospect of making a fool of Mr. Brock.

“ And how is it to be done? Just as we have done it already, to be sure. He has lost ‘Miss Gwilt’ (otherwise my housemaid), hasn't he? Very well. He shall find her again, wherever he is now, suddenly settled within easy reach of him. As long as *she* stops in the place, *he* will stop in it; and as we know he is not at Thorpe-Ambrose, there you are free of him! The old gentleman's suspicions have given us a great deal of trouble

so far. Let us turn them to some profitable account at last; let us tie him, by his suspicions, to my housemaid's apron-string. Most refreshing. Quite a moral retribution, isn't it?

"The only help I need trouble you for, is help you can easily give. Find out from Mr. Midwinter where the parson is now, and let me know by return of post. If he is in London, I will personally assist my housemaid in the necessary mystification of him. If he is anywhere else, I will send her after him, accompanied by a person on whose discretion I can implicitly rely.

"You shall have the sleeping-drops to-morrow. In the meantime, I say at the end what I said at the beginning—no recklessness! Don't encourage poetical feelings by looking at the stars; and don't talk about the night being awfully quiet. There are people (in Observatories) paid to look at the stars for you—leave it to them. And as for the night, do what Providence intended you to do with the night when Providence provided you with eyelids—go to sleep in it.

"Affectionately yours,

"MARIA OLDERSHAW."

4.—*From the Reverend Decimus Brock to Ozias Midwinter.*

"Boscombe Rectory, West Somerset,

"Thursday, July 3rd.

"MY DEAR MIDWINTER,—One line before the post goes out, to relieve you of all sense of responsibility at Thorpe-Ambrose, and to make my apologies to the lady who lives as governess in Major Milroy's family.

"*The Miss Gwilt*—or perhaps I ought to say, the woman calling herself by that name—has, to my unspeakable astonishment, openly made her appearance here, in my own parish! She is staying at the inn, accompanied by a plausible-looking man, who passes as her brother. What this audacious proceeding really means—unless it marks a new step in the conspiracy against Allan, taken under new advice—is, of course, more than I can yet find out.

"My own idea is, that they have recognized the impossibility of getting at Allan, without finding me (or you) as an obstacle in their way; and that they are going to make a virtue of necessity by boldly trying to open their communications through me. The man looks capable of any stretch of audacity; and both he and the woman had the impudence to bow when I met them in the village half an hour since. They have been making inquiries already about Allan's mother—here, where her exemplary life may set their closest scrutiny at defiance. If they will only attempt to extort money, as the price of the woman's silence on the subject of poor Mrs. Armadale's conduct in Madeira at the time of her marriage, they will find me well prepared for them beforehand. I have written by this post to my lawyers, to send a competent man to assist me; and he will

stay at the rectory, in any character which he thinks it safest to assume under present circumstances.

"You shall hear what happens in the next day or two.

"Always truly yours,

"DECIMUS BROCK."

---

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE CLOUDING OF THE SKY.

NINE days had passed, and the tenth day was nearly at an end, since Miss Gwilt and her pupil had taken their morning walk in the cottage garden.

The night was overcast. Since sunset, there had been signs in the sky from which the popular forecast had predicted rain. The reception-rooms at the great house were all empty and dark. Allan was away, passing the evening with the Milroys; and Midwinter was waiting his return—not where Midwinter usually waited, among the books in the library—but in the little back room which Allan's mother had inhabited in the last days of her residence at Thorpe-Ambrose.

Nothing had been taken away, but much had been added to the room, since Midwinter had first seen it. The books which Mrs. Armadale had left behind her, the furniture, the old matting on the floor, the old paper on the walls, were all undisturbed. The statuette of Niobe still stood on its bracket, and the French window still opened on the garden. But, now, to the relics left by the mother, were added the personal possessions belonging to the son. The wall, bare hitherto, was decorated with water-colour drawings—with a portrait of Mrs. Armadale, supported on one side by a view of the old house in Somersetshire, and on the other by a picture of the yacht. Among the books which bore in faded ink Mrs. Armadale's inscription, "From my father," were other books inscribed in the same handwriting, in brighter ink, "To my son." Hanging to the wall, ranged on the chimney-piece, scattered over the table, were a host of little objects, some associated with Allan's past life, others necessary to his daily pleasures and pursuits, and all plainly testifying that the room which he habitually occupied at Thorpe-Ambrose was the very room which had once recalled to Midwinter the second vision of the dream. Here, strangely unmoved by the scene around him, so lately the object of his superstitious distrust, Allan's friend now waited composedly for Allan's return—and here, more strangely still, he looked on a change in the household arrangements, due in the first instance entirely to himself. His own lips had revealed the discovery which he had made on the first morning in the new house; his own voluntary act had induced the son to establish himself in the mother's room.

Under what motives had he spoken the words? Under no motives which were not the natural growth of the new interests and the new hopes that now animated him.

The entire change wrought in his convictions by the memorable event that had brought him face to face with Miss Gwilt, was a change which it was not in his nature to hide from Allan's knowledge. He had spoken openly, and had spoken as it was in his character to speak. The merit of conquering his superstition was a merit which he shrank from claiming, until he had first unsparingly exposed that superstition in its worst and weakest aspects to view. It was only after he had unreservedly acknowledged the impulse under which he had left Allan at the Mere, that he had taken credit to himself for the new point of view from which he could now look at the Dream. Then, and not till then, he had spoken of the fulfilment of the first Vision, as the doctor at the Isle of Man might have spoken of it—he had asked, as the doctor might have asked, Where was the wonder of their seeing a pool at sunset, when they had a whole network of pools within a few hours' drive of them? and what was there extraordinary in discovering a woman at the Mere, when there were roads that led to it, and villages in its neighbourhood, and boats employed on it, and pleasure parties visiting it? So again, he had waited to vindicate the firmer resolution with which he looked to the future, until he had first revealed all that he now saw himself of the errors of the past. The abandonment of his friend's interests, the unworthiness of the confidence that had given him the steward's place, the forgetfulness of the trust that Mr. Brock had reposed in him, all implied in the one idea of leaving Allan, were all pointed out. The glaring self-contradictions betrayed in accepting the Dream as the revelation of a fatality, and in attempting to escape that fatality by an exertion of free will—in toiling to store up knowledge of the steward's duties for the future, and in shrinking from letting the future find him in Allan's house—were, in their turn, unsparingly exposed. To every error, to every inconsistency, he resolutely confessed, before he attempted to assert the clearer and better mind that was in him—before he ventured on the last simple appeal which closed all, "Will you trust me in the future? will you forgive and forget the past?"

A man who could thus open his whole heart, without one lurking reserve inspired by consideration for himself, was not a man to forget any minor act of concealment of which his weakness might have led him to be guilty towards his friend. It lay heavy on Midwinter's conscience that he had kept secret from Allan a discovery which he ought in Allan's dearest interests to have revealed—the discovery of his mother's room.

But one doubt had closed his lips—the doubt whether Mrs. Armadale's conduct in Madeira had been kept secret on her return to England. Careful inquiry, first among the servants, then among the tenantry, careful consideration of the few reports current at the time, as repeated to him by the few persons left who remembered them, convinced him at last that the family secret had been successfully kept within the family limits. Once satisfied that whatever inquiries the son might make would lead to no disclosure which could shake his respect for his mother's

memory, Midwinter had hesitated no longer. He had taken Allan into the room, and had shown him the books on the shelves, and all that the writing in the books disclosed. He had said plainly, "My one motive for not telling you this before, sprang from my dread of interesting you in the room which I looked at with horror as the second of the scenes pointed at in the Dream. Forgive me this also, and you will have forgiven me all."

With Allan's love for his mother's memory, but one result could follow such an avowal as this. He had liked the little room from the first as a pleasant contrast to the oppressive grandeur of the other rooms at Thorpe-Ambrose—and now that he knew what associations were connected with it, his resolution was at once taken to make it especially his own. The same day, all his personal possessions were collected and arranged in his mother's room—in Midwinter's presence, and with Midwinter's assistance given to the work.

Under those circumstances had the change now wrought in the household arrangements been produced; and in this way had Midwinter's victory over his own fatalism—by making Allan the daily occupant of a room which he might otherwise hardly ever have entered—actually favoured the fulfilment of the Second Vision of the Dream.

The hour wore on quietly as Allan's friend sat waiting for Allan's return. Sometimes reading, sometimes thinking placidly, he wiled away the time. No vexing cares, no boding doubts troubled him now. The rent-day, which he had once dreaded, had come and gone harmlessly. A friendlier understanding had been established between Allan and his tenants; Mr. Bashwood had proved himself to be worthy of the confidence reposed in him; the Pedgifts, father and son, had amply justified their client's good opinion of them. Wherever Midwinter looked, the prospect was bright, the future was without a cloud.

He trimmed the lamp on the table beside him, and looked out at the night. The stable-clock was chiming the half-hour past eleven as he walked to the window, and the first raindrops were beginning to fall. He had his hand on the bell, to summon the servant, and send him over to the cottage with an umbrella, when he was stopped by hearing the familiar footstep on the walk outside.

"How late you are!" said Midwinter, as Allan entered through the open French window. "Was there a party at the cottage?"

"No! only ourselves. The time slipped away somehow."

He answered in lower tones than usual, and sighed as he took his chair.

"You seem to be out of spirits?" pursued Midwinter. "What's the matter?"

Allan hesitated. "I may as well tell you," he said, after a moment. "It's nothing to be ashamed of; I only wonder you haven't noticed it before! There's a woman in it as usual—I'm in love."

Midwinter laughed. "Has Miss Milroy been more charming to-night than ever?" he asked, gaily.

"Miss Milroy!" repeated Allan. "What are you thinking of! I'm not in love with Miss Milroy."

"Who is it, then?"

"Who is it? What a question to ask! Who *can* it be but Miss Gwilt?"

There was a sudden silence. Allan sat listlessly, with his hands in his pockets, looking out through the open window at the falling rain. If he had turned towards his friend when he mentioned Miss Gwilt's name, he might possibly have been a little startled by the change he would have seen in Midwinter's face.

"I suppose you don't approve of it?" he said, after waiting a little.

There was no answer.

"It's too late to make objections," proceeded Allan. "I really mean it when I tell you I'm in love with her."

"A fortnight since you were in love with Miss Milroy," said the other in quiet, measured tones.

"Pooh! a mere flirtation. It's different this time. I'm in earnest about Miss Gwilt."

He looked round as he spoke. Midwinter turned his face aside on the instant, and bent it over a book.

"I see you don't approve of the thing," Allan went on. "Do you object to her being only a governess? You can't do that, I'm sure. If you were in my place, her being only a governess wouldn't stand in the way with *you*?"

"No," said Midwinter; "I can't honestly say it would stand in the way with me." He gave the answer reluctantly, and pushed his chair back out of the light of the lamp.

"A governess is a lady who is not rich," said Allan, in an oracular manner; "and a duchess is a lady who is not poor. And that's all the difference I acknowledge between them. Miss Gwilt is older than I am—I don't deny that. What age do you guess her at, Midwinter? I say, seven or eight and twenty. What do you say?"

"Nothing. I agree with you."

"Do you think seven or eight and twenty is too old for me? If you were in love with a woman yourself, you wouldn't think seven or eight and twenty too old—would you?"

"I can't say I should think it too old, if——"

"If you were really fond of her?"

Once more there was no answer.

"Well," resumed Allan, "if there's no harm in her being only a governess, and no harm in her being a little older than I am, what's the objection to Miss Gwilt?"

"I have made no objection."

"I don't say you have. But you don't seem to like the notion of it, for all that."



There was another pause. Midwinter was the first to break the silence this time.

"Are you sure of yourself, Allan?" he asked, with his face bent once more over the book; "are you really attached to this lady? Have you thought seriously already of asking her to be your wife?"

"I am thinking seriously of it at this moment," said Allan. "I can't be happy—I can't live without her. Upon my soul, I worship the very ground she treads on."

"How long——?" His voice faltered, and he stopped. "How long," he reiterated, "have you worshipped the very ground she treads on?"

"Longer than you think for. I know I can trust you with all my secrets——"

"Don't trust me!"

"Nonsense! I *will* trust you. There is a little difficulty in the way, which I haven't mentioned yet. It's a matter of some delicacy, and I want to consult you about it. Between ourselves, I have had private opportunities with Miss Gwilt——"

Midwinter suddenly started to his feet, and opened the door.

"We'll talk of this to-morrow," he said. "Good-night."

Allan looked round in astonishment. The door was closed again, and he was alone in the room.

"He has never shaken hands with me!" exclaimed Allan, looking bewildered at the empty chair.

As the words passed his lips the door opened, and Midwinter appeared again.

"We haven't shaken hands," he said, abruptly. "God bless you, Allan! We'll talk of it to-morrow. Good-night."

Allan stood alone at the window, looking out at the pouring rain. He felt ill at ease, without knowing why. "Midwinter's ways get stranger and stranger," he thought. "What can he mean by putting me off till to-morrow, when I wanted to speak to him to-night?" He took up his bedroom candle a little impatiently—put it down again—and, walking back to the open window, stood looking out in the direction of the cottage. "I wonder if she's thinking of me?" he said to himself softly.

She *was* thinking of him. She had just opened her desk to write to Mrs. Oldershaw; and her pen had that moment traced the opening line:—"Make your mind easy. I have got him!"

---

## The English Drama during the Reigns of Elizabeth and James.

---

### PART III.

It is the function of criticism to separate the transient from the permanent, and to show in what consists the true value of the subject which it treats. Therefore, after reviewing the history of our drama, we are led to ask some questions of more general import than those with which we have been occupied. What were the causes of its eminent success? Why did it sink into oblivion? What influence has it exerted over our literature? What place shall we assign to it among the really important products of human genius? In other words, we ask: Were these plays, which seem to most of us so dull and dead, at any time endowed with life and power over men? Did they educate the English, and help to make us what we are? These are the weightiest questions belonging to the subject, more grave than the settling of dates or dubious readings, and less easy to resolve than inquiries into the antiquities of theatres. To some of them we gave a partial answer by endeavouring to prove that the English drama embodied in its works the spirit of the sixteenth century. But it is not enough to show that the playwrights lived in sympathy with their age, and that their poems are of value to historical students. We want to estimate the extent of their influence in forming national character, and of their consequent claim to our respect. In order to do this we must resume some points already partly entertained.

Three things must never be lost sight of: first, that our dramatic literature grew up beneath the patronage of a whole nation; secondly, that the English during the period of its development exhibited no aptitude for painting or the plastic arts; and lastly, that pedantry and superstition were both comparatively absent from our character. The drama, more than any other form of art, requires a national public. We have seen how thoroughly the people and the playwrights sympathized in England. This was not the case with Italy, or France, or Spain. In Italy there was no general sense of nationality. Each little state worked for its own aims, and maintained its own traditions. Among them all no single Athens, with indubitable intellectual pre-eminence, arose to make a focus for Italian arts and sciences. Florence more nearly fulfilled this part than any other city, but she failed to inspire the rest of Italy with that strong feeling of national existence which is necessary for the full perfection of the theatre. This sentiment prevailed in France and Spain, which countries, next to England, have produced the finest modern dramatic poems. But in Spain the power of court etiquette, and of ecclesiastical intolerance, checked

the free display of genius; while France was fettered with academies and pedantic veneration for the antique. Again in Germany the proper conditions for theatrical development were wanting. The municipal and religious interests of the German cities fostered painting, but there was no London to produce a stage. At a later period, when Goethe tried to form a German theatre, he complained bitterly of this defect. The nation had no central interest, no brain, no heart, to which he could appeal.

Again, while all the artistic energies of Italy in the sixteenth century were absorbed in giving *form* to ideas, England had no original or imported art. Even architecture had just ceased to exist. Sculpture, painting, and music occupied the thoughts of the Italians. Poetry was subordinate to these in popular estimation. We may notice this in reading Poliziano's *Orfeo*. It is not a play, but an opera, lyrical, and intended to be sung. Though favourable to the display of decorative skill, and affording themes for music, it is almost destitute of action, dramatic interest, and thought. In England, everything was entirely reversed. Our artists studied the intellectual, instead of the formal expression of ideas. They endeavoured to present an image to the mind, and knew not how to please the eye. We could not boast of one native painter or sculptor. Holbein, our only great naturalized artist, produced portraits almost exclusively. Torrigiano, a second-rate Italian sculptor, visited our barbarous shores to make his fortune, and was off again as soon as possible. The fairest promise could not lure a Florentine beyond Paris: even there he grumbled at inclement skies and savage men. England to them was like Siberia to us, Paris like St. Petersburg. Thus the whole powers of the English intellect were driven in upon themselves. The world of beauty did not lie outside. Poets had to find it in their thoughts, in the study of mankind, and in the dreams of the imagination. This gave depth and intensity to our dramatic writing. It enabled the playwrights to penetrate the deepest places of the soul, and forced them to express themselves through language, for want of any other medium. Such has always been our power. Mr. Matthew Arnold, in a recent paper on the influence of academies, compares the "genius" of the English intellect with French "openness of mind and flexibility of intelligence." The literature of the Elizabethan age he calls a "literature of genius," complaining of the poverty of its results, and pointing to the power and fecundity of that which followed the French "literature of intelligence" in their "great century." Mr. Arnold is, in a measure, right. Ours *was* a literature of genius, which, after Milton, fell into decay. It remains the monument of our peculiar mental power, eccentric and unequal, full of poetry, but deficient in neatness; with more of matter than of style, "of Pan than of Apollo," rough where the French is smooth, fiery where the French glitters, uncouth where the French is elegant; sublime, imaginative, passionate, profound, where Gallic art is graceful, prosaic, rhetorical, and shallow. But he is wrong in accusing the Elizabethan literature of inherent barrenness. The civil war suspended our æsthetical development. A sect averse to arts and letters triumphed, and were followed by a dissolute, half-foreign reign. Political and religious

interests, more grave than those of art, consigned the dramatists and poets of the sixteenth century to oblivion for a time. But, as we shall see, their influence abides. The memory of that age, like the memory of youth and spring, is an element of beauty in the mental life of a people too much given to common things. Its blossoms, too, unlike the pleasures of youth, or the flowers of the spring, are imperishable, and with them every rising poet may crown his forehead.

Thirdly, our dramatists were wholly unfastidious and uncritical in their own tastes, and also unfettered by external authority. The wits of Italy apologized for making use of "il volgare." Their energies were absorbed in scholarship. Poliziano left his *Giostra* unfinished to write the *Miscellanea*, and Tasso pleased all ears by honeyed echoes of Virgilian cadences. English art began when the great effort of scholarship in restoring the classics had been achieved. The antique spirit and blind reverence for Greece or Rome could not weigh us down. Our scholars were not the national poets as in Italy. And our poets were not scholars; or if scholars, they were renegades from the University, preferring London to Cambridge, the theatre to the lecture-room, Bandello and Spanish comedies to Aristotle and Euripides. If Corneille was forced to condemn his *Cid* because it sinned against the unities of the French Academy, while Lope de Vega and Calderon had the Inquisition before their eyes, from both academies and inquisitions the English dramatists were free. To write what they chose so long as they did not blaspheme against religion, libel the Government, or grossly corrupt public taste, was the privilege secured to them by royal letters patent. These men thoroughly understood their trade. Besides, the art of writing plays was in the atmosphere, not acquired in a study, but fostered by the intellectual conditions of the age. It had grown gradually from small beginnings to great results. Successive masters had developed it, each taking from his predecessor what he had to teach. It was then a craft; now it is a taste. The playwrights formed a school. They acquired technical dexterity in their use of language, metaphors, and tricks of trade. They handled subjects by tradition in a dramatic manner. Blank verse rang in their ears. They knew the forms of entrances and exits, the proper mode of introducing underplots, of working up their action to a climax, and of bringing their chief characters into striking situations. It may be observed that in all branches of intellectual industry, wherever technical knowledge is absolutely required as a condition of success, a school springs up. Men of the greatest genius have first to practise their art as a handicraft before they breathe into its forms the breath of their own life. This was eminently the case with respect to Italian painting. Scholars were articulated to Ghirlandajo at Florence, or to Perugino at Perugia. Drawing, the mixing of colours, the use of peculiar preparations, the art of design, the conventional method of treating subjects, formed a technical education which the young artist underwent. The same might be said of Italian and of Greek sculpture, of architecture, and of music. At no time in the world's history, if we except the period of the Homerids and of the Minnesingers, has there been a school of poetry,

because the part of poetry which can be taught is wholly insignificant. For the same reason the greatest philosophers have in modern times received no special training, though Greek science may be said to have followed the rules we have laid down. It is, however, strictly true that wherever Art leans on some external support, wherever it deals with a material, it gains immensely by the foundation of a school. From one great master to another, the torch is carried on. All run in concert to a common aim, and each is emulous of distinction in the course. Nor was our drama an exception from this law. The requirements of theatres, scenes, actors, and audience came to be understood by practice, and the means of satisfying them were capable of being communicated by instruction. Thus dramatic composition in the age of Elizabeth was a trade, but a trade which, like that of sculpture or music, allowed men of genius to detach themselves from the ranks of creditable journey workmen, and which, in their hands, took place among the highest of the arts. Shakspeare stands, where Michel Angelo and Phidias stand, above all rivals; but he owed his dexterity in a great measure to training. Had he been a solitary playwright, he would have left us splendid poems—poems equal, at least, to those of Spenser. But would not their form have been less attractive? could they have failed to lack freedom and resource in the development of human interests? Power over the machinery of Art, and a knowledge of those details which, unless acquired, must hamper the highest genius, are what Shakspeare and Michel Angelo and Phidias owed to the labours of their predecessors and contemporaries.

We are led by these observations to consider another point in the art of our dramatists. During the age in which they flourished there prevailed in England what may be called clairvoyance in dramatic matters. The Greeks and the Italians of the Renaissance possessed clairvoyance in the plastic arts. Our age is clairvoyant in science. At each great period of the world's history the human intellect has seen more deeply than at others into the secrets of some particular subject, perceiving intuitively and with ease what before and after it has been unable with much pains to apprehend. In the days of our dramatic supremacy, the nature of man became more wholly the subject of representative poetry than it has ever been at any other time. In the works of Shakspeare and his comrades, the passions, thoughts, and deeds of men are shown to us in a manner so real that Sophocles, Calderon, and Corneille, when compared with them, appear to have represented abstract conceptions or outward forms rather than the inner truths of life. In order to understand the working of this dramatic instinct we might compare the stories on which our dramatists founded their tragedies with the tragedies themselves—*Romeo and Juliet* with the novels of Bandello, or the *Duchess of Malfi* with Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*. It will be seen that, taking up the mere outline of a legend, they have filled it with life, "piercing," to use the words of Milton, "dead things with inbreathed sense." In the old tales from which they drew the subjects of their plays there was plenty of

action but no character, plenty of declamation but no poetry, plenty of sententious maxims but no wisdom. The dramatists knew how to take the framework and to change the spirit of these pieces. They felt that one essential quality of the drama is, that it should not moralize. It requires *doing*, and not talking, as an essential. On the stage, facts, motives, characters, must be seen through, and not described. They must grow and evolve themselves before the eyes of the spectators. The drama has nothing "subjective" in its style. It represents an age of clear perceptions, keen sympathies, and active life; but one that does not meditate upon itself. Therefore our playwrights made action the first point. They sought to lay bare the nature of man, using dramatic incidents as machinery for this purpose. The moral was inferred and secondary. They felt that a play should contain its moral, as the body holds the soul. Both should be one—one form, one being, unexplained. Novels admit of the didactic and reflective vein. What Plato says of the *Epos* may be applied to them. There is one narrator who can pause and interrupt his tale to moralize; but the drama has no narrator, no pause, no moral, except the thought that binds all into unity. As in life we reason upon actions, so in the drama, from what is done before our eyes our moral sense deduces its conclusions. The stage is the world, on a small scale in point of size, but large in point of thought and of the interests which it crowds into a narrow space.

The clairvoyance of our playwrights enabled them to understand the true nature of their art, and to separate instinctively the epic, idyllic or didactic treatment from the dramatic. It also gave them an insight into things beyond their own experience. Shakspeare painted much that he had never seen, and it was true. Many of his persons he must have drawn from his own thoughts or from rare hints. As the skilled anatomist will reconstruct from a single bone an animal long since extinct, so Shakspeare from one trait of character could reason out the whole nature of a man or woman. His fine sense enabled him to argue safely from analogies, and his words varied with unerring discrimination according to the qualities of those through whom he spoke. These powers, in a greater or less degree, were shared by all his fellow-dramatists. Nor did they care for change of time or place. The strangest circumstances seemed familiar to them, keeping as they did firm hold upon their psychological conceptions. An artist of our own time seems only able to describe what he has often seen or felt. He animates his picture with portraits of the few people he has studied. He carefully places them in scenes well known to him. The names of Byron, Shelley, and Miss Brontë instantly suggest this kind of imitative and subjective art. Even Goethe in this respect differed from our dramatists. He never invented a character. He never wandered beyond his own experience—and rightly so, because the tact required to do this faultlessly is lacking in our age. Goethe painted what he saw and painted it like life. Shakspeare knew without seeing what he had to paint, and sympathized with Nature's workmanship so deeply that he caught her craft. In Plato's language,



he had seen the Idea, and all its special manifestations were consequently known to him.

Another point in their clairvoyance was the intense reality which every fact of history possessed for them. There was no barrier of any sort to the free passage of their human sympathies. The men of Greece and Rome, of the Bible, and of chivalrous romance, were equally real to them with the men of their own time, because they neglected mere accidental points of difference, and dwelt upon the common aspects of humanity. We, in the nineteenth century, seem to have forgotten the life and spirit of past ages in our zeal for criticism. Even art we make a vehicle for our historical researches, removing from us far away the facts which we attempt to realize. We endeavour to throw ourselves back several hundred years, and to understand how people then talked and walked and thought. We study their dresses, their language, and the lands they lived in. But their lives we fail to embrace as kindred to our own, and after all our efforts we know more about the upholstery and millinery than about the men of the past. When art was truly vital, painters and poets neglected the outer form and did not waste their thoughts on local colouring. They tried to apprehend the spirit of past men, to think of them as though they were their living teachers, friends, and brothers. The shepherds of the Nativity in miracle-plays were Robin, Dick, and Tom. Julius Cæsar wore the same helmet as Richard the Third and Tamberlaine. Our Lord, in Decker's comedy, is called "the first true gentleman who ever breathed." What indiscriminating critics have complained of as the improprieties and anachronisms of our dramatists really proceeded from the vitality of their conceptions. To them every great event was of eternal significance. The delivery of the law by Moses, for example, would not have seemed to them the action of a Bedouin Arab presenting stone tables at the foot of Sinai to men and women of Semitic countenances. This is how Mr. Herbert has represented the scene with minute attention to ethnological characteristics, geological peculiarities, and propriety of costume. He has obeyed the genius of our century, fixing on the temporal and accidental aspects of his subject and striving after historical rather than spiritual reality. In his effort to see the event as it actually happened he has made us feel its distance and wonder whether it concerned ourselves. The old dramatists would have conceived this fact more as Raphael has conceived it, seeing in it no mere transitory event, no past or special scene of history, and thinking less of the lawgiver, the people, and the mountain, than of the universal value of the law. God in the person of Moses; mankind as represented by the Israelites; the undying significance of an occasion, though in its local details of inferior interest, would have been present to their minds. They lived the life of History. We act charades, masquerading in the garments of the past. These remarks tend only to illustrate the vivid realism of the sixteenth century. They are not meant to throw contempt upon our own spirit, so potent in its criticism, and so comprehensive in its view, which may in time lead even art to a higher realism. It is good for us



meanwhile to keep in mind an energetic style of art quite different from our own, and in the midst of our science and philosophy to contemplate the works of an uncritical but keenly-sighted age.

The truths at which our dramatists aimed in their treatment of history were always psychological. They fixed the mind on personal and domestic rather than upon political events. Here again they showed the delicacy of their instinct by selecting those points only which are common to humanity. It often happens that their knowledge of facts is slight and inaccurate. They form childish conceptions of characters in their public capacity. But always where the passions, aims, and duties of men are to be displayed, we find unerring judgment. Their plays illustrate the consequence of human actions, and, though often written with political and moral purposes, they never seem to embody a theory or to convey prepared instruction. Calderon often preaches sermons in his plays. Webster's arguments against Roman Catholicism consist in the abominable wickedness of the cardinals whom he portrays. Their love of liberty finds vent not in declamations against slavery, nor in exhibitions of political disgrace, but in the picture of a tyrant's private cruelty, licentiousness, and death.

We are here led not unnaturally to consider a question of great importance, what was the moral teaching of the dramatists? Speaking generally, we answer, unexceptionable. They do not indeed distribute rewards to the virtuous and punishment to the vicious; but goodness, though unfortunate, is never pitiable, and wickedness, though triumphant, is never glorious in their plays. Throughout they maintain a tone of manliness. Our sympathy leans to the pure and strong and noble characters. We shrink from the baseness and corruption which are intentionally displayed in all their ugliness. Our moral sense is rarely shocked by doubtful hints and vice made elegant—the sentimentalism of more modern works of fiction. What is bad is bad, and receives no extenuation. What is good is very good, arrayed in native beauty, and shining with imaginative splendour. Yet it cannot be denied that there are exceptions to this healthy influence. Many of Fletcher's, Ford's, and Massinger's plays are founded upon subjects so radically corrupt that the reading of them could scarcely fail to injure an ingenuous mind. Every Elizabethan comedy contains passages of undisguised obscenity, though none are so revolting as those of the Restoration. Even tragedies are, as readers of Shakspeare know, not free from this defilement. These ribald scenes were introduced, we learn from apologies in prologues and epilogues, to suit the lower portions of the audience. No one is obliged to read the clownish jests. They are always mere excrescences upon the action of the plays, and by their plain indecency disgust the taste which might have been perverted by less nauseous exhibitions of impurity. Our ancestors could certainly more "boldly nominate a spade a spade" than we are apt to do. It is a matter of doubt whether their morality was really worse than ours. But in the progress of civilized society the intellectual sense becomes so sharpened that words, which once were words, in course of time affect us like the very things they signify.

Against the wickedness of the drama the Puritans waged war, and the playwrights parried their attacks by satires. It seems certain that theatres were the resort of the lowest persons, and that a continual noise disturbed their neighbourhood. The inhabitants of Blackfriars petitioned the Privy Council against Burbage when he tried to build a playhouse in their quarter. The Lord Mayor cancelled the Queen's patent to Lord Leicester's company by refusing to admit the actors to the city, on account of the idle and profligate rabble which they drew together, and of the fighting, thievery, and drunkenness of which playhouses were the centre. Puritan divines preached constantly against them. Archbishop Grindall tried to suppress theatres altogether. Another prelate called them "schools of vice, dens of thieves, and theatres of all lewdness," from the pulpit of St. Paul's. Gosson, Stubbes, Northbrooke, Prynne, Collier, and many others kept up a war of books and pamphlets against their corruption of the youth. But though it was clear that theatres encouraged profligacy, Elizabeth and James were far from listening to the vehement abuse of them by Puritan memorialists. To institute a censorship of plays, to restrain unlicensed companies from acting, to confine them to the neighbourhood of the metropolis, to forbid their playing on Sundays, and to make the use of oaths or of the name of God in dramatic compositions penal, were the utmost measures that either of these sovereigns could be got to take against theatrical exhibitions. Elizabeth seems to have understood the utility of plays as means of education, and to have fostered the tastes of the people in this direction. Even in the reign of Edward VI. their influence over popular opinion had been recognized. In 1549 plays and interludes were forbidden as seditious, for political rather than for religious reasons. Mary restricted the representation of plays tending to advance the spread of Protestant doctrines, while she caused miracles and mysteries to be performed in favour of Catholicism. Elizabeth on ascending the throne reversed these edicts by putting a stop to all religious exhibitions, while she organized the secular drama, and took it under her especial patronage. Indeed, the theatres became in her reign a centre of popular instruction, a school of patriotic principles, where all the nation heard the praise of civil and religious liberty. However pernicious in detail may have been the subjects of some plays, and however flagrant the abuses to which theatres gave rise, yet the good they did must have outbalanced the evil. Here the people learned to love their Queen and to hate slavery. They saw before their eyes the deeds of patriots and heroes. The horrors of bad government, the corruptions of the priestly rule, and the blessings of a free state, were shown them in such characters as they could plainly comprehend. Poets, orators, and scholars poured forth their learning, eloquence, and imagery to represent to Englishmen the glories of their land. The want of a national epic was supplied by those dramatic scenes in which Crecy, Agincourt, and Arthur lived again. If the ballad of Chevy Chase stirred Sir Philip Sidney like the blast of a trumpet, how must these lines have roused the valour of an English audience :—

Agincourt, Agincourt !  
 Know ye not Agincourt ?  
 Where the English slew and hurt  
 All the French foemen !  
 With our guns and bills brown,  
 Oh ! the French were beat down,  
 Morris pikes and bowmen !

Even now we cannot read the dying words of Gaunt without profound emotion :—

This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,  
 This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,  
 This other Eden, demi-Paradise,  
 This fortress, built by Nature for herself,  
 Against infestation and the hand of war ;  
 This happy breed of men, this little world ;  
 This precious stone set in the silver sea,  
 Which serves it in the office of a wall,  
 Or as a moat defensive to a house,  
 Against the envy of less happier lands ;  
 This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,  
 This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,  
 This land of such dear souls, this dear, dear land,  
 Dear for her reputation through the world —

Reading this, we are obliged to break off from want of breath. Words and ideas follow and repeat each other in a passionate succession of intense earnestness. Nor was it only to patriotism and to the sense of liberty that they were raised. Heywood draws a picture of Tragedy, in his *Apology for Actors*, discredited, disgraced, yet still a queen, upbraiding him with the ingratitude of his times :

Have I not whipped Vice with a scourge of steel,  
 Unmasked stern Murder, shamed lascivious Lust,  
 Plucked off the visor from grim Treason's face ?

Heywood, warming at her just complaint, takes up the pen and argues in this fashion for the moral value of the stage :—" A description is only a shadow, received by the ear, but not perceived by the eye ; so lively portraiture is merely a form seen by the eye, but can neither show action, passion, motion, nor any other gesture to move the spirits of the beholder to admiration ; but to see a soldier shaped like a soldier, walk, speak, act like a soldier ; to see a Hector all besmeared in blood, trampling upon the bulks of kings ; . . . to see, as I have seen, Hercules in his own shape hunting the boar . . . and lastly on his high pyramids writing *Nil ultra !* Oh, these were sights to make an Alexander !"

Turning to his own land :—" What English blood, seeing the person of any bold Englishman presented, and doth not hug his fame, and hunny at his valour, pursuing him in his enterprise with his best wishes, and as being wrapt in contemplation, offers to him in his heart all prosperous performance, as if the personator were the man personated ?"

Speaking of historical plays :—" If we present a foreign history, the subject is so intended that in the lines of Romans, Grecians, or others, either the virtues of our countrymen are extolled or their vices reprov'd."

Massinger, in his play of *The Roman Actor*, makes Paris argue in the same style for the lofty vocation of his art. It is clear from these sentences alone, if it were not abundantly proved by every scene in every play written at that period, that the English stage exercised a most powerful influence over the development of our national character. It inflamed the souls of statesmen, scholars, warriors, seamen, poets, and philosophers, with an ardent love of liberty, and a sense of moral greatness and personal responsibility, and an enthusiastic admiration for works of intellectual power. Reading the plays of Shakspeare, Marlowe, Jonson, Fletcher, Marston, Heywood, Decker, Chapman, and others, makes one cry with Milton :—"Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation raising herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks; methinks I see her as an eagle muing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday flame; purging and unscaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms." Even the Puritans, who hated plays, must have been thankful for their influence, when they exchanged their character of private sanctimoniousness for one of public patriotism. Then they found in the people a nobility of spirit and dauntless familiarity with speculations of the boldest kind, and a deeply rooted zeal for freedom, fostered by the theatres. These obligations remained, however, unrecognized. Perhaps even now we are only beginning to acknowledge them. The drama had done its work—its vigour was exhausted. Every day it became less pure, and more subservient to the pleasures of a luxurious court. The Puritans swept it all away; and when the stage revived with Charles the Second it had changed its character. No good can be expected from the plays of the Restoration. Our theatre was no longer national; its function in England had been great; but it had accomplished that function; it had helped to cherish a strong sense of nationality, to educate the people by introducing into our island the ideas which agitated Europe at the time, to produce a truly original school of Art, and lastly, to develop the resources of our language. On most of these points we have already dwelt. But the last requires some patient consideration. Heywood, in the pamphlet from which we have already quoted, adduces, among other arguments in favour of the stage, that through its means English had been raised "from the most rude and unpolished tongue" to being "a most perfect and composed language." Each playwright, he tells us, tried to discover fresh beauties of rhythm and expression, and to leave the dialect more pliable and fertile for his successors. It is remarkable that the dramatists themselves were conscious of this noble emulation. Like the painters of Italy, they worked in concert, each maintaining his own place, each profiting by past experience, each dealing with a material plastic in his hands and susceptible of infinite modification.

Thus, during the half-century in which our drama lived, English

became a language capable of expressing exquisite and various thoughts. It was no longer a rude Saxon dialect, holding in suspension fragments of Latin and French : but all its elements were fused into a vital whole. We cannot attribute this change entirely to the drama. Yet if we compare the poetry of that period with contemporary prose compositions, it will be clear that while they started nearly on a par, the prose style remained quaint, crabbed, unmelodious and stiff, while the language of the playwrights had become versatile, musical, and dignified. Even the prose writing of the stage was among the best then going. Lyly, first of English authors, produced true Attic prose. Nor is it possible to calculate the influence exerted by poetry over the splendid theological rhetoricians of the next century. The capabilities of English were exercised in every department by dramatic writing. For the purposes of conversation it had to assume an epigrammatic terseness. In description of scenery, or in the eloquent outpourings of passion, it expressed thoughts difficult to seize and delicate gradations of feelings. Sometimes sustained declamation was required : at others the most light and graceful play of fancy had to be conveyed in passages of lyric elegance. Different characters gave different shades of meaning to the words they used ; yet every sentence had the polish of a work of art. And throughout all changes the artist was obliged to continue clear and capable of being comprehended by an untutored audience. These were the general results of dramatic composition in its influence over the growth of language. It must also be remembered that the genius of each author developed a new aspect of the Proteus. The fluent grace of Heywood, the sweet sentiment of Decker, Marston's pregnant sentences, the dreamlike charm of Fletcher's melody, Marlowe's "mighty line," Webster's depth of pathos and heart-quaking bursts of passion, Jonson's gravity, Massinger's smooth-sliding eloquence, Ford's glittering declamation, and the style of Shakspeare, which embraces all—as some great organ holds all instruments within its many stops—these remained as monuments of composition to succeeding ages. Who shall estimate what they have done for us ? Our ancestors sat in the theatres and heard them all. Their ears became accustomed to this variety of music, their intellects impregnated with divers modes of thought. Besides, the vocabulary was nearly doubled by this use of language. Shakspeare is said to have 15,000, while the Old Testament contains 5,642 words. The drama collected all the floating forms of popular speech, together with the technical phraseology of trades and of the schools, and stereotyped them in literature ; so that instead of being satisfied with the meagre and artificial diction of the Popian age, we may return to those "pure wells of English undefiled," and from their inexhaustible springs refresh our language when it seems to fail. In brief, the Elizabethan literature remains a permanent reservoir of liberal thoughts and vigorous idioms, a model of energetic style, and a mine of words. It is good for us to turn from the wrought "Corinthian" elegance of our contemporary poetry to the broad and natural beauty of those authors. Poets like Keats, inspired by a reaction against prevailing canons, will always find in them the serenity of Parnassus.

Their faults again are not our faults, nor are we likely to be led astray by them.

Nor must it ever be forgotten that the drama, in its effort after self-emancipation, created the great pride of English poetry—blank verse. No language, except Greek, has possessed a metre so powerful and capable of infinite variety as this. The Greek iambic for dramatic composition, and the Greek hexameter for epic, are perfect. But the English blank verse, or “licentiate iambic,” as it has been called by an old author, combines the excellences of these metres. When we examine the Italian *terza rima* and the French *Alexandrine*, we see at once how the elaborate rhyming system of the one and the languid movement of the other render them unfit for the freest poetical expression. The blank verse of Germany, compared with ours, is as yet monotonous and tame. It never underwent the rigorous exercise which our dramatic writers gave this metre in the sixteenth century, and by which they brought out all its elasticity and force. Marlowe, when he began to write for the stage, found a rhyming couplet in common use. This was tedious and hampering. It prevented the proper development of character, and encouraged a false style of moralizing declamation. A few authors were employing what Nash described as “the swelling bombast of bragging blank verse” and “the spacious volubility of a drumming decasyllabon;” by which he meant to indicate a languid five-foot metre differing in nothing from the old couplet, except in the absence of rhyme. The people did not care for it, and the poets of the rhyming school looked upon it with disfavour. Marlowe saw its capabilities. He broke it up by introducing pauses of different lengths, by occasionally throwing in an extra syllable, or cutting the line short, by beginning with a trochee when variety was needed, and by substituting for the jingling rhyme a subtle system of alliterative melody and carefully balanced periods. Marlowe’s line became the basis of all English composition in blank verse. His opponents gave way at once, and adopted the new discovery. Succeeding poets altered it; and stamped their own peculiarities upon the metre. But to him belongs the glory of its creation. During the interregnum of bad taste, which began with the Restoration, and prevailed until the first years of this century, a return was made to the rhyming decasyllabic couplet. Milton, it is true, protested against rhyme as being “the invention of a barbarous age to set off wretched matter and lame metre.” He, however, belonged to the past golden age, “and dwelt apart.” It will be remembered that when Dryden wished to versify the *Paradise Lost* in his own couplet, the old poet only said, “Let the young man tag his rhymes.” In the nineteenth-century renaissance of our literature, Shelley, Coleridge, Keats, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning have again vindicated the superiority of blank verse, and affiliated the style of our poetry to its true Elizabethan parentage. It might also be remarked in passing that the old dramatic spirit of our forefathers has reappeared in the fertility and power exhibited by contemporary novelists.

We have thus briefly and imperfectly reviewed some of those points which give a permanent importance to our dramatic literature. Those



who care for poetry for its own sake will always look with reverence upon the English authors of that period. But our age is only satisfied with wrought gold. The dramatists are too bombastic, diffuse, improbable, prosaic in part, and in part licentious, to suit our taste, and unfortunately there are very few of us who have a genuine love of art. It always was the "youngest song" which charmed the listener's ear. Therefore the few who like to wile away an hour with poetry read Tennyson. Besides, our traditional homage is yielded to Shakspeare. He stands for the authors of his age as Handel represents the past of vocal music. This must always be the case, and justly so; for Shakspeare was the greatest poet of his time, if not of *all* time. Still it is right that students of literary history should now and then remind the general reader that the other playwrights of his age were no mean men. Not very long ago the name of Shakspeare was almost forgotten. By degrees admirers disinterred his works, and spoke of him as if he had been born like Pallas from the brain of Jupiter. Johnson paid a surly homage to his power, but of his contemporaries he said that "they were sought after because they were scarce, and would not have been scarce had they been much esteemed." At length Malone began to hint that other authors of great merit laboured with Shakspeare in the days of his pre-eminence. Dodsley published twelve volumes of old plays. Gifford subsequently spent pains upon the text of some of them. Later on they became "the rage" in a certain set. Coleridge and Hazlitt lectured on their plays. Lamb made selections which he enriched with careful notes. The *Retrospective Review* published notices of the more obscure authors. Since those days, Mr. Dyce, Hartley Coleridge, Mr. Halliwell, Mr. Wright, and others have edited the scattered works of different dramatists, with antiquarian zeal and critical ability; while Mr. J. P. Collier has illustrated by his industry and learning the theatrical annals of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Still we do not yet possess a complete history of the English stage, or a "full abstract" of its great productions, though the Germans have several, and a Frenchman has lately produced one of considerable merit. Speaking of this national want, De Quincey uses the following words, which eloquently sum up all that we have tried to say: "No literature, not excepting even that of Athens, has ever presented such a multiform theatre, such a carnival display, mask and antemask, of impassioned life—breathing, moving, acting, suffering, laughing:

Quicquid agunt homines—rotum, timor, ira, voluptas,  
Gaudia, discursus.

—All this, but far more truly and more adequately than was or could be effected in that field of composition which the gloomy satirist contemplated, whatsoever in fact our mediæval ancestors exhibited in the 'Dance of Death,' drunk with tears and laughter, may here be reviewed, scenically grouped, draped, and gorgeously coloured. What other national drama can pretend to any competition with this?"



## The Famous Quire of Earndale.

---

WHEN, fifteen years ago, I was inducted to the Rectory of Earndale, the parish church possessed a famous quire. Not that the quire of Earndale differed much from that almost obsolete type which fifteen years ago it was deemed the young churchman's duty to extirpate on first donning the white tie. It was a famous quire, which every year—once or twice in the year—strangers would come to listen to. It consisted of but five men, one of whom played a clarionet with bold, firm tone, that sustained the treble, and gave confidence to the crack-voiced boys and rough-voiced girls who hardly stood in need of encouragement. Another played a violoncello, to which he had attached a fifth string tuned to F F, in order to add sonority to the deeper bass. A third performer played the flute, on which he executed the counter-tenor part as it was written for him in the G clef, *above* the treble or air. Of the remaining two men, one sang the air with the clarionet, only an octave lower, and the last sang the bass. But besides this, the violoncello player sang bass, tenor, or air, or counter-tenor in a screaming falsetto, one part or the other as he deemed it necessary to ornament or support the service of song.

Such was the Quire of Earndale; they sang pluckily, and made a cheerful, if not a melodious noise. I gave them supper once a year, but could not induce them to adopt more ecclesiastical music than glees and songs set to sacred words. Still, we were better off than the Meeting, where they all sang in discordant chorus, while the parson played the big fiddle in the pulpit. Like other things in Earndale, the quire was an institution, and I did not attempt to remove it.

But after five years, clarionet left the valley, and we began to feel symptoms of dissolution. Flute wouldn't play the air, it was so tame; and when remonstrated with, withdrew and carried off tenor with him to the Meeting. Still we had a sturdy voice for the air, and the rural "master of song." But alas! the master, always fond of drink, became so uproarious that we were obliged to dismiss him. The crisis came when a stranger was taking duty for me. A new tune of Abel's own composing was to be sung, one full of eccentric turns and intricate distances. The quire made a start, quavered, and broke down. Abel sounded the note anew, and again they broke down: this time a pause. "Let us pray," said the officiating clerk, meekly. "Pray be blowed!" shouted Abel. "Let's try again." It was Abel's last Sunday of office.

For some Sundays we tried congregational singing, our one remaining voice, with the help of a pitch-pipe, leading the tune; but bit by bit the congregation grew tired of a duty which had always devolved upon paid

officials, and many a tune was sung by good old Jamie and the children,—he with spectacles on nose and book in hand—while the other hand, hooked in his red waistcoat, beat time on his breast to the tune: save when, in some pathetic verse, it was released to cuff some youngster who gave tongue too lustily, and didn't appreciate the "temper" of the strain. Then in our perplexity we procured a small barrel-organ, which had seen service in a room used for dancing on week-days, and service on Sundays. It was a peculiar instrument: the first time we tried it, it went off like a musical snuff-box, and played all the tunes successively, including a valse and "Merrily Danced the Quaker's Wife." Earndale has not forgotten that Sunday yet. The wardens and sexton managed to carry it out (it was not large) into the churchyard, but even there it fired away tune after tune amid the snow and cold, till all the machinery was unwound. Before the next Sunday we had it put in order, but it seldom went right. Sometimes the wires just elevated the keys high enough to let a portion of the wind into the pipes, producing mournful whines like key-hole music; sometimes, from want of pinning the barrel, it wound from one tune into another with marvellous dexterity; sometimes the wires were bent, and discord harsh and strong grunted and thundered in one line, while in the next, for half a line, was a vacuum of notes of any sort. At last we understood it better, and congregational singing in some sort actually was inaugurated.

Like most old churches, Earndale had suffered under the beautifying furor of the eighteenth century: whitewash, a ceiling, large square pews,—one description serves for all. Far be it from our sober criticism to join in the outcry against that age; what would have remained of our old churches without such "beautification?" At all events it preserved them to us, and probably in a more seemly state than they have been since the wars of the Roses.

Earndale church had suffered in the process; rood-screen, chancel, arch, reredos, was gone; some windows were square, some circular, some Grecian, and there was an urn in each corner, and a sun-dial over the door. We began to restore; and little by little replaced arch and screen and window, chancel and oak-roof; seated the nave afresh, and quarrelled over the seats, as churchmen will to eternity. We paid our bills. The church was a seemly one; and we began to think it was not quite the thing for the district chapel of Oatgate to glory in a finger-organ, while we ground music on a barrel.

So we formed a committee, Farmer Jolly, our churchwarden, in the chair. We ordered a new organ,—a handsome instrument: "plenty of music in it," was old Jolly's instruction to the builder. The subscriptions didn't quite make up the cost, but then committees never look at that insignificant item, and we resolved to open the organ with *éclat*, and have a collection.

A week or so before the day, a deputation of the ladies of my parish called at the rectory with a mission to the rector. I am a man

of simple and retired habits. I felt nervous on hearing it was a deputation of ladies, but was greatly relieved to read on the cards the names of Miss Fanny Peaflower and Miss Bessy Floskin, two of the youngest young ladies in Earndale, both very musical, both pets of the rector from childhood,—and knew it too. I suspected they had some deep scheme in their pretty heads, but all the same was infinitely glad that they, and not the widow, my Lady Topsticks—who always talks on pathetic topics, goes to balls and can't come to church—or Miss Stiers, whose conversation is learned or religious,—had been chosen to represent the ladies of Earndale. I don't think I abuse confidence if I say that all the pretty speeches they could frame, and all the charming looks they could put on, were on that morning forthcoming, just to fathom the temper in which their errand would be received. They managed their mission adroitly. The ladies of Earndale, as I knew, were fond of music, and they had often heard me say that church music ought to be more cultivated than it is, and they wished very much—they were sure I should not object—to celebrate the opening of the organ with a choral service.

"Choral service!" exclaimed I, astonished, "and where is the quire to be found? You wouldn't have old Jamie and the school-children attempt it?"

No; the ladies would undertake that duty, come and sit in the chancel, and sing all the responses. "And, do you know, we have practised so much, we can do it perfectly."

"But how can you manage," said I, "without male voices? Your small sweet notes will sound angelic, and all too unearthly."

"Oh, there's young Seabody, and half-a-dozen more who have attended *all* the practices."

"I'll be bound they have. Why didn't you let me come, young ladies!"

"We wished to give you a surprise."

"And so you do," replied I.

"But really now, if you will consent, we all wish it so; and it's only once! The Bishop can't write aggravating letters when all we want is to pass the day off creditably, and get a good subscription."

With such pure motives, urged by such lips, what could I do? Of course I yielded; and then—just as I had showed them round my garden, and gathered my most beautiful roses for them, and they were bidding me good-by—"And oh, Mr.—, I had almost forgot,—will you intone the service?"

No, no; I knew better than that. What voice I might have had ten years ago was exhausted in lifting up, Sunday after Sunday, the category of my people's sins.

Then would I allow the curate of the new church, who sang tenor beautifully, to take the service?

O Earndale, how cruel! Here I had asked a dignitary to preach, and had a surplice, new starched and clean, lying in my study for

my part; and to be done out of it by two young ladies! and for that puppy Augustus Claighfern, in high-collared coat and cassock tie, just come from Oxford, and great at all the evening parties, and always following Fanny Peaflower! O Earndale! far better thy rector's wishes were not uttered then—nor chronicled now. They were not clerical!

In the end they prevailed on me to let Augustus intone, and content myself with the lessons. There was, however, another party besides the rector to be won over, and that a party not so easily coaxed out of its whims and prejudices. At the head of it was Farmer Jolly; at the bottom of it—the soul of all the mischief it perpetrated—Miss Stiers. Rich and decided, she hated Puseyite ways; and old Jolly was persuaded we were all to become perverts to Romanism in the lump, against our will, just as the Sepoys fancied they were to be christianized surreptitiously by biting the greased cartridge. He came with reproachful civility, and lent me a folio Book of Martyrs with pictures of the cruelties of the Inquisition. Mrs. Jolly gave me an account of a visit she made to hear such a choral service elsewhere, and couldn't abide it. "It had such a Popish twang in it—that way of doing the service." And the worst of it was, that I, the rector—no party to the thing except by implication—had to smooth all these difficulties. Well, there was only one way. Lady Topsticks asked the Misses Jolly to one or two evening parties, and that quieted the Jollies; and Miss Stiers was, without much persuasion, coaxed into a promise to attend a Penny Reading in the school-room in the evening of the day of our Festival, and to read herself—to a distinguished and educated audience, with all the pathos of a poetic soul—the laureate's last poem.

Then for a week the church was thronged from morn to eve; all the ladies and young men came to decorate it. Large placards with suitable inscriptions were nailed and stuck round with flowers; the pillars wound with wreaths; the windows crowned with garlands; and primroses, cowslips, every flower of spring, were gathered from hedgerow, garden, and greenhouse, and tastefully appropriated. The young gentlemen were very busy, and so were the young ladies. I fear their conduct was not exactly in all respects suitable to the place they worked in. But then, as Charley Seabody said: "How can you help Bonnie Bessie Floskin down the ladder, and only look good?"

At last the day was come. It was a beautiful morning. I went early in the dawn to the top of Earndale Scar, and watched the tide-waves roll in under the early sunshine, flashing like the wings of a silver dove. Not a sign of rain. We were to have a fine May-day; and for a collection, let me tell you, a fine day is no despicable power.

The service was at eleven, but long before eleven a large flag waving, and peals one after the other clashing out from the tower, reminded Earndale of what no one stood in danger of forgetting. As the time drew near, carriage after carriage rolled up, clustered with fair faces; and

dashing riders and visitors from all the valley trooped in. Earndale for once was gay. There were carriages left standing without their horses on the green; there were little knots of well-dressed people wandering about; there were the orderly lines of the school-children, and disorderly crowds of the truants gathering round the nut-sellers, who brought their merchandise as near the temple as they dared; there was the organ-builder—a proud man—come from London on purpose to be present, and to be paid; there was the dignitary in cassock and band; and Augustus, who stepped out of a drag, arrayed in dusty canonical costume, with a square cap such as Earndale never spied before, and thought it some new fashion.

My duty required me to attend these gentlemen, so we proceeded through the church-yard full of on-lookers, and through the aisles, then beginning to fill; the churchwarden and sidesmen, busy and anxious and important, at a loss what to do with cantankerous Earndalers who would occupy their own seats that day, and not make room for full-pursed visitors.

In the chancel was our quire, as fair a sight as ever was seen when men-singers and women-singers served the service of song in the temple. A row of ladies sate on each side, and the young fellows in white ties behind them: all of both sexes, I observed (what I never saw before), for once looking serious.

I had objected to their processioning to their seats: country people might have mistaken it for another ceremony in which young ladies take part at the altar. Then in the vestry I was obliged to use strong language to induce Augustus to replace in his bag—(a blue one like a brief bag)—a stole of white satin with crosses of gold and scarlet beautifully inwrought, and with which he was tastefully arraying his lawn-enveloped shoulders.

Eleven o'clock! clash went the bells all together in a sudden explosion, and then were still, their several harmonic tones sobbing and dying away in dissonance. We sallied forth, and the organ discoursed triumphant music.

Augustus was nervous; he didn't keep his note, and sometimes made desperate hits at distances, and only arrived within three-quarters of a tone. Then the quire was disconcerted; only the organist picked them up so deftly that most people thought it was all right. The performance on the whole was creditable, only it was nothing else but a performance. Old Jolly alone made an ill-natured remark. His daughter Emily wondered how Mr. Augustus Claighfern could chant at all without his stole: "As if a tom-cat couldn't purr without his tail. It was the ladies that dashed him."

After this, I thought we should have nothing but harmony in Earndale. Alas! three weeks had not passed before grim Miss Stiers (who had only the little boys and the rector for her audience) came with a long story of the wicked and profane doings of the quire. Charley

Seabody had been seen by somebody who didn't attend to the service, busy with the golden gay ringlets of Fanny Peaflower (the little flirt! she knew Augustus couldn't be there on Sunday!) behind the organ curtain. Miss Stiers thought it atrocious. So did not I, but then I felt it a duty to say something, and put it to Charley whether he hadn't better sit away from the organ. "Oh, no, he was wanted to draw the stops;" and the young scamp went and told the whole parish that the rector was jealous, and stories and fables of every hue were concocted and circulated in consequence, and I had to request them both to sit with their mammas.

Then our volunteer organists began to quarrel, and some who could play wouldn't play; and others who couldn't play would play, and oftentimes hit the wrong keys, which cried lustily in reply; or made harmony with two fingers only, and oftentimes anything but harmony. At last, unkindest cut of all, came a letter from the Bishop. The proceedings in Earndale had for some time past occupied his attention: the flower decorations—the choral performance—the improper proceedings—and, in consequence, remarks of parishioners about the rector; and, what grieved his episcopal soul to the quick, the unauthorized practice of singing a response, which for generations Earndale had heard read. "Peccavi; peccavi," was all I could reply. "My new organ, instead of harmony, produces nothing but discord."

From that day I dare not think about music in Earndale, far less record my impressions. We have musical parties, but I shrink to the very farthest corner of the room, and dare not applaud Emily Jolly, or Fanny Peaflower, or Bessie Floskin, in a song, or express my abhorrence of bacchanalian glees, lest I should be saddled with personal feelings; and when on Sundays I hear the organ tapped like a pianoforte, I groan to myself, and wish for "the famous quire of Earndale," with its clarionet, flute, and violoncello.

---

## The Profession of Advocacy.

---

To assert, in these days, the vital importance of a pure administration of justice—the gravity of the part played with regard thereto by barristers—the immense influence exercised by public opinion upon men's actions for good and for evil, would be to proclaim anew truths which have long since become truisms. Yet, strange to say, these truisms point to a truth which has been scarcely regarded. What recognition do we find of the fact that the popular notions as to the duties of barristers ought to be just and clear? When we find the extremest and most opposite views commonly held, many (and those not all of the gentler sex) upholding a theory which would make barristers the knights-errant of the law, the business of whose lives it should be to seek out injured innocence wherever it is to be found, whilst others talk as though their duty were to be verdict-getters *purs et simples*, getters of verdicts, judgments, decrees, for any and every client, by any and every means in their power, short only of actual crime, how can we suppose that the truth in question has received recognition and assent? Yet, if it be expedient that barristers should be watched in the exercise of their profession by an enlightened public opinion, it is by necessary implication expedient that the popular notions as to the duties of that profession should be just and clear. For that thing of so great power and might, which men call public opinion, is not the opinion of a few public writers; their praise and their censure are powerless so long as it is only their own praise, their own censure: public opinion really consists in the opinion of the great mass of individuals who constitute that factitious whole, the public. According as any great proportion of the latter concur in sound and healthy views, or concur in views that are unsound and lax in their unsoundness, or concur in views that are unsound but impracticable, or in no views at all of any clearness, so will the influence of public opinion be salutary, pernicious, or null. Is it, then, expedient that barristers should be watched in the performance of their duties by an enlightened public opinion? Or is this guarantee rendered superfluous by the character of these duties, or by the control to which they are already subject?

Now, if the verdict-getting theory of an advocate's office were the right one—if it were true (as some assert, not merely in loose talk, but gravely as a deliberate proposition) that an advocate has nothing whatever to do with the right or wrong of the cause committed to him—nothing whatever to do with the right or wrong of the means by which it is to succeed—nothing to do but to welcome the client, to know no person in the world save him, and to reckon all things subordinate to his interests—



it would certainly be a mistake to talk of extending to barristers the influence of public opinion: they would have a sufficient guiding and controlling power in the direct impulse of self-interest. But when, on a recent occasion, this theory was propounded before a great assembly of barristers by one who, to many other claims upon all men's respect and admiration, adds those of unwearying philanthropy, the silence with which the *dictum* was received, and the applause—the warm, enthusiastic applause that welcomed the assertion by a less eminent speaker of the contrary doctrine, that it is the duty of an advocate to uphold his client's interests *per fas*, but not *per nefas*, by fair but not by unfair means, by right but not by wrong—this applause and that silence testified pretty strongly to the general feeling of the bar. And it is not to be supposed that an undoubtedly able set of men reject unnecessarily a theory which would allow them to pay a greater regard to their own interests. We cannot, therefore, if we would, escape the conclusion that a barrister is *not* by duty to his client absolved from duty to all the world beside, that he must distinguish between fair and unfair means of supporting the cause entrusted to him; and we may pass on to consider whether there are or are not sufficient guarantees that he shall resort only to such means as are fair.

Now, at the outset of this inquiry, let it be remarked, that a barrister not only is invested by law with a very wide discretion as to what is fair and what is unfair in any particular case—for the abuse of which discretion he neither is nor can be punished by any material penalties—but, moreover, always *must* be so invested and always must remain so free from liability to punishment. The truth of this will appear upon a little consideration. He is and clearly must be entrusted with a wide discretion not only as to what causes he will undertake, but also as to the means by which he will support them when undertaken: rules of evidence cannot prevent his bullying an honest witness out of his five wits; you cannot have rules of argument which shall prevent malignant and gratuitous insinuations against the character of his opponents, or a coarse handling of topics which touch us all most nearly, or the creating, by means of sophistry, an impression which not always the vigilance of those whose duty it is to guard against it can do away with. And though in each of these cases the consequences may be most disastrous, yet the character of the offence is such, the evidence of it is so difficult to obtain, that it always must remain unpunished—save by opinion. For evidence which is insufficient to justify the infliction of any positive penalty may be amply sufficient to justify suspicion, and the fear of so suffering in opinion is and always must be the one check upon a barrister. This being so, the whole question as to the advisability of barristers being watched by an enlightened public opinion resolves itself into this, whether the fear of professional opinion is or can be sufficient.

That it is sufficient, few will maintain. It is, therefore, more material to consider why it is not.

In the first place, it must not be forgotten that there has been of late years a vast increase in the numbers of the profession. The weakening effect of this upon the power of moral control was pointed out by Justice Talfourd twenty years ago—in an essay on Lord Eldon and Lord Stowell in the *Quarterly Review* for December, 1844—and the remark would certainly not have less force now-a-days. Again it should be remembered that, in more ways than one, the opinion of the bar necessarily touches least those who need its restraining influence most. Men of doubtful character, if on circuit, are generally either never admitted to the bar mess or are subsequently excluded from it, and while free to continue their professional practice and malpractices, have no associates whose good-will they need fear to forfeit. Or, worse still, they form a class apart, herding together in those courts the business of which is most distasteful to men of feeling and refinement. In such an atmosphere the trickster and the bully quickly grow to rank perfection. And the men who most need the restraints of professional opinion are least affected by it in this way also—that the necessity of a fair character for one who aspires to the higher honours of the profession touches not men whose sole idea in entering it is to make as much money as possible. Speak to one of these common-minded fellows of the days when he may, to use a time-honoured phrase, be in the front ranks of the senate and the bar, and he will laugh in your face: “he can make all the money without all that.” Again, it must not be forgotten that after all professional opinion is only the opinion of a small portion of the community. What can its praise or blame matter beside the indifference of the public? Besides, even when taken at its best, the reciprocal influence of the members of the bar upon one another has always this inherent defect, namely, that it is that of men who by force of long companionship have become little inclined to condemn strongly each other’s faults. And even such as it is, the influence of professional opinion has scarcely fair play. There are counteracting forces. Those who wish to appreciate accurately the incentives to a high intellectual and moral standard on the part of a barrister should remember how peculiarly the profession is situated in relation to those who distribute its business. “These” (as Talfourd said, in an essay originally published in the *London Magazine*, and entitled “The Profession of the Bar,”) “are not the people at large, not even the fictitious assemblage called the public, not scholars, nor readers, nor thinkers, nor admiring audiences, nor sages of the law, but simply attorneys. In this class of men are of course comprised infinite varieties of knowledge and of worth; many men of sound learning and honourable character; many who are tolerably honest and decorously dull; some who are acute and knavish, and more who are knavish without being acute.” “Respectable as is the station of attorneys, they are” (said Talfourd, writing forty years ago, though he would probably speak more favourably of them now) “greatly inferior to the bar in education and endowments. And yet on their opinion, without appeal, the fate of the members of the profession depends.”

Upon the whole, looking at the relations of the members of the bar with one another and with others, one sees no cause to wonder that the influence of its opinion should be insufficient, nor any ground of hope for the future. But, if society at large showed less indifference to the matter, if there were less blind worshipping of success and more of discerning approbation, less condemnation of men in the mass, and more of pointed and discriminating censure, and, together with a more persistent exacting of that which is truly expedient or necessary, less ill-advised requiring of that which is neither necessary nor expedient—then indeed many blemishes might disappear which now mar the administration of justice.

How comes it, in good sooth, that, with so much talk of the universal disregard of lawyers for truth and justice, it should be in practice left to the profession itself to animadvert upon particular instances of such misconduct? It is surely time that the Bar and the Public should know each other better.

In order to understand what a barrister ought to do, and what he ought not, let us see a little what is the *rationale* of the system of advocacy.

Every one will agree that he who is charged to decide any question ought to have present to his mind all the considerations that deserve weight on either side, since, otherwise, his decision may be right, but may equally well be wrong. This condition there are several methods of endeavouring to fulfil. You may either cause the parties interested to lay before the judge or other person invested with judicial functions a bare statement of the question in dispute, leaving it to the latter to make all due inquiries and to decide thereon unassisted by argument; or you may cause the parties to ascertain and bring forward the circumstances which they respectively consider to favour their own view, still leaving it, however, to the judge to form his own conclusions therefrom, unassisted by anything in the nature of argument; or you may cause the parties not only to ascertain and bring forward such circumstances as they respectively consider to favour their own view, but, either in person or by representative, to argue the case fully, in presence of the judge, each for his own side. That the last-mentioned system affords a better guarantee than any of the others that every circumstance which deserves weight on either side shall have its due weight given to it, is clear both in principle and experience; and it is no less clear that it is better, were it only for the sake of the advantage gained in point of perspicuity and conciseness, to have the case argued by men trained to the task rather than by the parties themselves. Nor would it afford the same security to have the case argued by barristers or other ministers of the court *impartially*. It being thus no man's duty and no man's interest to urge all the arguments on any one side, many on each side would naturally be passed over or urged with slight force, and such of them as were urged would be presented to the court in a loose, irregular manner, instead of the whole strength of one side being brought out in sharp relief against the whole strength of the other.

Such being—very roughly and inadequately described—the *rationale* of the system of advocacy, let us now consider, a little in detail, what are the duties of one who follows that profession: first, as to the causes which he will undertake, and, secondly, as to his manner of conducting them when undertaken.

In the first place, it is a palpable absurdity to say that an advocate ought to undertake only causes of the justice of which he is perfectly assured; since it is obviously impossible to say of any cause, however fair and equitable it may seem on the party's own showing, that it will not turn out to be unjust when the opposite side is heard. The immediate result of the doctrine would be that he would never undertake any cause at all, and the ultimate result, that justice would cease to be administered, unless at the infinite waste of time and labour implied in the pleading of causes by the parties themselves.

On the other hand, it is a piece of pure sophistry to argue that an advocate cannot justifiably use any discretion as to the party for whom he appears, because if he does so, he usurps an office which does not belong to him, and, moreover, exercises it prematurely upon an untried cause. For if the case be clearly bad on the party's own showing, what must it be on his adversary's? And on what ground is an advocate to be deprived of all free-will and compelled to put his talents at the service of iniquity? True it is, that one who has a proper distrust of his own judgment and a due regard for the consequences which would follow did he and his colleagues lightly refuse to undertake causes, will be cautious of denying his assistance, especially to a person accused of crime. But that there are occasions in which he not only may, but ought to refuse his aid, in civil cases at least, is fully recognized by the opinion of the profession. The most courteous and considerate of judges has been led to express from the bench his regret that any gentleman at the bar should have been found to undertake such and such a cause.

But ought a barrister to withhold his services when the legal right sought to be exercised is, or appears to be, morally unjust? A question which must be answered on broad grounds of public utility, and not on any such assumption as that a barrister acts under compulsion; since of compulsion, in the strict sense of the term, there is obviously none; and of compulsion in the sense of liability to disfavour for a breach of professional etiquette, society at large can hardly be expected to take much account. Now, in equity, a barrister refusing to aid in enforcing a strict right would virtually take upon himself to declare that the law should not have effect; for no suit in the courts of equity can be brought without the signature of counsel in testimony of its propriety. At common law the case is not exactly similar; but it is manifest that even there a lay person can seldom hope, without professional aid, to prosecute successfully the rights which the law gives him. Is it, then, desirable, as a means of closing the avenues to injustice, that a barrister should (practically) bar the exercise of a strict legal right unless he approves of the conduct

of the suitor in a moral point of view? Ought public opinion to require him to do this? Take the case of an informality in a will. The intention and wishes of the testator are clearly and unequivocally expressed, but there is a technical objection to the validity of the instrument, and the heir-at-law, or nearest of kin, seeks to take advantage of the mistake. Is it desirable that the advocate should refuse his assistance unless the suitor satisfies him that there is a sufficient excuse for taking away the property from those for whom the testator intended it, and giving it to a person for whom it was not intended? The advocate might in so refusing be barring the road to injustice; he might, on the contrary, be barring the road to a fair and equitable claim: for who shall say that the client may not have ample justification in circumstances which he does not choose to confide to a stranger? The true answer seems to be, not only as to the above, but as to all similar cases, that it is the duty of an advocate to attempt to dissuade from a course which is apparently too harsh an insisting on legal rights, but that it is not his duty to carry his opposition farther, and virtually to interdict the exercise. At the same time it is well to remember that without some extrinsic control the law will always work occasional injustice, even though you amend it as much as you will. "A certain harshness, sternness, and disregard of individual cases of hardship, are inseparable from the very existence of law." It must always require to be tempered in its application. So that the only sound general conclusion in which we can rest is, that it is rather the client than his representative that a wise public will put upon his trial when advantage is taken of a harsh rule of law.

But supposing the cause to be undertaken and to be free from questions of the last-mentioned kind, what (we are now to inquire) is to be the advocate's manner of conducting it?

In the first place (supposing the issue to be one of fact), he will, in examining his own witnesses, adhere faithfully to those useful rules which forbid any suggestion of the answer desired; avoiding that disreputable trick of asking a question in an irregular form which suggests the reply, and, on its being objected to, withdrawing it and asking it in another shape, by which means "the suggestion is made, the mischief done, and the other side deprived of his remedy." "The degree of good faith with which barristers conform to the rules of evidence, whether or not they are for the moment advantageous to their cause, is (as Mr. Fitzjames Stephen observes, in his interesting work, *A General View of the Criminal Law of England*, p. 282) the best test of their honesty." And in the cross-examination of his opponent's witnesses, distinguishing between means which are really of a nature to elicit truth, and such as are really of a nature to perplex or stifle it, he will sedulously avoid adopting the bullying, browbeating tone so much in vogue in certain of our courts. It is undoubtedly the duty of a cross-examining counsel to expose perjury when perjury has been committed. But to act towards an ordinary adverse witness on the assumption that he is perjured, is utterly unwarranted.

In most cases it inflicts either needless, or worse than needless pain, at best leaving the evidence unshaken, and the witness's feelings lacerated; oftener driving him to such a state, that he can neither recollect the truth nor utter it intelligibly. It is most desirable that fit instances of this should be selected for earnest, vigorous protest. There are actually men who have gone to the bar for no other reason than that they felt within themselves the capacity to become adepts in this noble art. That which a cross-examining counsel ought to do, and that which an honourable cross-examining counsel does, is to use such means as will detect and expose any conscious or unconscious inaccuracy into which the witness may have fallen, whilst leaving his faculties clear to explain himself. For this purpose such skill as Scarlett's—that great master of the art of cross-examination—who would gossip with a witness, till he so diverted the current of his thoughts, that the truth would come forth completely free from bias, and from the disturbing effect of all foregone conclusions; such skill, I say, is most useful and laudable, and should not be disparaged by calling it “astuteness;” and it is to arts like these that the generality of barristers resort. To suppose that the practice of bullying and browbeating is at all common, except in a very small and disreputable class of the profession, is not only a mistake, but a most unhappy mistake. It has a most prejudicial effect, in attaching to the name of barrister a lower estimation than either the theory of the office, or the general conduct of those who fill it, deserves, and so rendering less marked than should be the distance which in public esteem separates those who worthily follow from those who ignobly pervert a noble profession. The existence of the misconception may be traced to the fact (referred to by a former writer in the *Cornhill*), that of those people who form their judgment of barristers from original sources of information, and not from novels and the like, the greater part derive their ideas from the cases which are reported at length in the newspapers, which are not the really common, or the really important cases—mercantile causes of all kinds, *bonâ fide* questions about dispositions of property and the like, “possessing no interest for the general public;” but rather “matters of a slightly scandalous kind—actions for libel, assault, seduction, or breach of promise of marriage—actions by fraudulent bill-discounters—horse-causes, in which whole days are spent in complicated perjury—and, in fact, every suit which could be classed under the general title of *Fool v. Knave*.”

There is one part of a cross-examining counsel's duties which may usefully be made the subject of further remark, and on which, fortunately, it is open to us to borrow from Mr. Stephen's work already referred to. I mean the cross-examination of witnesses to their credit. “The case,” as Mr. Stephen says, “is one of conflicting interests. The interest of the public” (he is speaking of criminal cases only, but the public is also interested in the equitable decision of civil cases) “is that juries should have all the materials which are requisite to the formation of a sound judgment. The interest of the witnesses is that their character and



the history of their past lives should be respected. Questions relating to the credit of witnesses are frequently most material, and this may be the case, not only when the matters are relevant, but when they are irrelevant to the matter at issue." In these cases (according to Mr. Stephen) they ought to be asked. "On the other hand, they may be needless and cruel to the last degree. Suppose a case rested principally on the oath of a single person, who was obliged to admit that he had made similar charges on former occasions, that the persons so charged had been acquitted, that he had himself been tried and punished for extorting money by threats of accusation, would not all this be decisive of the case at issue? Yet not a word of it would be relevant to that particular charge. On the other hand, if a woman prosecuted a man for picking her pocket, it would be monstrous to inquire whether she had not had an illegitimate child ten years before, though circumstances might exist which might render such an inquiry necessary. For instance, she might owe a grudge to the person against whom the charge was brought on account of circumstances connected with such a transaction, and have invented the charge for that reason. It is practically impossible to lay down a positive rule distinguishing cases like the first from cases like the second of those instances . . . . A wide discretion" is necessarily left "in the hands both of the bar and of the bench." Taking into consideration civil as well as criminal cases, we shall probably come to this conclusion, amongst others, viz. that it is not the mere materiality or immateriality of the question which will be decisive of its propriety; but that this also must be considered—whether, even if it be in one sense worth while to put it, it is on the whole worth while to put it, regard being had to the degree in which it affects the value of the evidence, to the pain which it is likely to inflict upon the witness, and to the magnitude of the interest at stake between the parties, be they crown and prisoner, or ordinary civil litigants. It is well (for more than one reason) to observe that although a barrister who is a man of honour, and wishes honestly to discharge his duty, may often be obliged, by his instructions, to ask most painful questions, yet he may greatly alleviate the pain which he inflicts, by withdrawing the apparent imputation if the answer given is a plain denial, and by apologizing for the pain which he has caused. Most people will throughout agree with Mr. Stephen when he says, "An advocate is bound in honour (it appears to me) to take this course when a witness positively denies the imputation suggested by the question, unless he has strong grounds to disbelieve the denial;" and that "so far from injuring a witness's character, a question asked, answered, and apologized for in this manner may put an end to slanderous rumours, which had never before shown themselves openly;" and that "if an apology was not tendered freely, the judge might declare that in his opinion it ought to be made, which would go far to produce the same effect."

But it is time to proceed to consider what are the advocate's duties in arguing the question, whether it be one of law or of fact. And here it must be borne in mind that the advocate is not the judge. His office is



(as already stated, and for the reasons already stated) not to array conflicting probabilities and decide between them, but to urge as forcibly as he can the arguments on *one* side of the question. But in doing this it is not his duty to resort to sophistry or false logic. We are all of us, of course, every day, continually using, consciously or unconsciously, sophistical arguments on one subject or another; and all that can reasonably be required of the advocate is that he shall not knowingly do so; but so much may reasonably be required. And it is in vain to urge in excuse that the advocate is but the mouthpiece of his client, and therefore irresponsible for the language or the arguments which he advances. "He is a representative, but not a delegate. He gives to his client the benefit of his learning, his talents, and his judgment; but all through he never forgets (or should never forget) what he owes to himself and to others. If he be the advocate of an individual, and *retained* and remunerated (often inadequately) for his valuable services, yet he has a prior and perpetual *retainer* on behalf of truth and justice; and there is no crown or other licence which in any cause, or for any party, can discharge him from that primary and paramount retainer."\* And whenever he asserts aught of his own opinion or belief, he is of course bound to assert only that which he conscientiously believes. To engage an advocate is not to suborn a false witness. But probably, as a general rule, the less an advocate gives of his own opinions or beliefs, the better. Some men are from temperament more inclined than others to sympathize with and believe that truth and justice are on the side of the cause committed to them; so that to introduce the opinions of the respective litigants' counsel must tend to make the success or failure of either party's cause in some measure dependent upon an uncertain and accidental condition. Actual lying, wilful misrepresentations, we may pass by without comment.

There is one thing in argument (or more properly in persuasion) which an advocate is surely bound in honour to avoid, but which, nevertheless, men of the fairest reputation in their profession sometimes allow themselves to be guilty of—that is, influencing the jury by considerations utterly foreign to the case. For instance, if the credit of a witness be impeached on the ground of his having been previously convicted of some heinous crime, surely it is hardly honourable to try and get the jury to believe him out of compassion! Yet men of good standing will attempt this. If the question were indeed one of generosity or harshness towards a fallen man, then, no doubt, it would be right and praiseworthy to talk feelingly of the duty of charity, but when the fate of the witness is in no way dependent on the issue, but the question is one for impartial decision between the parties, such eloquence is then the purest clap-trap. And it is no excuse for such devices to say that it is open to the other side to set the balance right by resorting to the like trickery (for no

\* Justice Crampton, in "The Queen v. O'Connell,"—7 *Irish Law Reports*, pp. 312-13.

other word can be used), or to undo the ill effect produced by showing how unfair are such appeals to the passions; for if the effect is to be undone, why produce it? And if the other side are to resort to the like devices, what security can there remain for a true and just decision? The one simple test for all ordinary questions of right and wrong in advocacy is this: "Will the cause of truth be advantaged, supposing both parties resort to the like means?"

So long (it is well to observe) as an advocate conforms to this test by obeying faithfully the above and similar rules of argument to which it gives rise, it is not only most absurd, but it is most unwise on the part of a disinterested public to blame him for advancing, to the best of his ability, the arguments on *one* side only of the question. I do not say "unfair" so to blame him: for barristers are men of the world, and we know that, "when men are men of the world, hard words" (*if undeserved*) "run off them like water off a duck's back:" but I do say "most unwise," since every word of disparagement of that which does not merit it, takes from the weight of condemnation lying on that which really deserves reprehension. Let the public, then, reserve such epithets as "venal eloquence" for an employment of talents to which they justly apply.

A difficulty will, no doubt, be started here. "Granting," it will be said, "that he is in every sense a faultless advocate, who, his like pleading on the other side, pleads in such a way that the right side (humanly speaking) cannot fail to triumph; granting, further, that if two advocates were opposed to each other, each pursuing with equal ability the course above indicated, the truth would triumph with greater certainty in this way than by any other; yet an advocate is not justified in pleading in this partial manner when his opponent is inferior to him in ability." Not a very practical difficulty this. For, in the first place, the smaller matters get the smaller men, the greater matters the men of largest experience and ability. And a difference in ability may seem to exist where there is really none: want of brilliancy is often compensated by the possession of faculties less conspicuous but more effective. Scarlett was at least as great an advocate as Brougham. And if there should be, on the whole, a real difference in the ability with which the respective causes are conducted—if the one is done justice to and the other not—the client has probably his own carelessness to blame for not choosing a more proper representative. It rarely happens that a client is so poor as to be unable to secure in the usual way the services of an able advocate; and when the case does occur, the bar of England is not so devoid of men of spirit and honour that he need fear to want assistance, if his cause be just. But though, for these and other reasons, an advocate can rarely be required by any principle to relax his efforts, or to do part of the work which properly falls on the other side, yet it can never be lawful for him to take advantage of the inexperience of an opponent by resorting to means of forwarding his cause which he would never think of resorting to if opposed

by an equal in ability. Great advocates have done this, but surely it is eminently un-English and unfair.

It must, however, be confessed that although these one-sided contentions are sound in principle, and work well in practice where the end in view is to arrive at impartial truth, yet they are scarcely fitted, without modification (and even though each advocate conformed strictly to the theory of his office), for inquiries where to arrive at absolute truth is of less importance than *not* to err in a certain direction: and this is the reason why in criminal cases—where, obviously, it is of greater moment *not* to convict the prisoner if innocent than to ensure his conviction if guilty—the counsel for the crown is required not only to abstain from all false argument and from other like courses from which no good can ever come, and which the counsel in civil cases also are bound to avoid, but to abate somewhat of his exertions in urging sound arguments, and to point out to a considerable extent the arguments on the other side. The prisoner's counsel, on the other hand, is allowed, in the same spirit of moderation towards the accused, rather a wider licence than is conceded to counsel in civil cases: subject to some qualifications, he is expected to take, on behalf of his client, every advantage which the facts or the law afford. But though, speaking broadly, the counsel for an accused person is considered justified in taking, on behalf of his client, every advantage which the facts or the law afford, he is not held justified by the opinion of the bar, any more than by that of the public, in directing suspicion upon an innocent person when he knows of his client's guilt—as appeared with sufficient clearness in a notable case that occurred some years ago.

The whole subject of the moral code of the Bar is a most interesting one. Yet more important is the spirit by which its members are animated. True and weighty are those old words of Hooker: \* “If they which employ their labour and travail about the public administration of justice follow it only as a trade, with unquenchable and unconscionable thirst for gain, being not in heart persuaded that justice is God's own work, and themselves his agents in the business, the sentence of right, God's own verdict, and themselves his priests to deliver it, formalities of justice do but smother right, and that which was necessarily ordained for the common good is, through shameful abuse, made the cause of common misery.”

---

\* *Eccl. Pol.* bk. v.

## Erasmus.

---

ONE of the most singular literary revolutions is that which has befallen the great modern writers who, in acquiring their fame, used as an instrument the Latin language. We are not thinking now of men who, like Bacon, Spinoza, and scores of others, have employed Latin as a natural medium for communicating with the learned on philosophical subjects; nor of those who, like Gray or Addison, have occasionally produced pieces in professed imitation of the classical writers. We are thinking of that earlier race, to whom, whatever the language of their mothers or nurses, Latin was practically the language of their lives; who wrote in it whatever they wrote, histories, commentaries, epigrams, or private letters; who formed from it, and the Greek, the very names by which they were known throughout Europe; and who lived and corresponded familiarly with Danes, Poles, Portuguese, Italians, English, on the common basis of the use of a classical tongue, and the study of the classical literature. That these men performed an immense service to our modern civilization no competent judge will deny. But while enjoying the honey, the world has forgotten the bee. Age by age, as the modern languages have developed themselves, and the modern literatures have absorbed the riches of the past, oblivion has slowly gathered over the founders and pioneers of the new era. Like the knight mentioned by Froissart, who fell overboard from a galley, and was instantly sunk by his armour, *their* classical panoply has dragged them down. So it has been with Politian, with Mariana, with Buchanan, with Muretus; and so with ERASMUS, who had a prouder name and a greater popularity than them all. What we propose to do on this occasion, is simply to tell the general reader, to whom Erasmus is a name only, what manner of man he was and what kind of life he led; what was his influence on the modern world, and what his claims on the gratitude of mankind.

By race Erasmus was one of the great Teutonic stock, and always held it the chief success of his life that he had raised the condition of literature on the northern side of the Alps, and enabled "Germans" to dispute with Italians that supremacy in scholarship which more recent ages have conceded to them in music. But if he was "a German," as he sometimes calls himself, in this sense, he was more strictly a Dutchman or Netherlander, and was born a subject of the Dukes of Burgundy, to whom Holland had passed by an heiress in an earlier part of the fifteenth century. The circumstances of his birth were romantic; and the life of his father, Gerard, has been made in our own age the subject of a romance. Gerard belonged to a respectable middle-class family at Gouda, about twelve

miles from Rotterdam, on the way to Utrecht,—a decayed old town with a great grass-grown square, still visited by the tourist for the sake of some painted glass in its principal church. He was a man of good education as the times went, and had much of the wit and liveliness which afterwards distinguished his son—*too* much of it for a certain Margaret, daughter of a physician at Sevenbergen in Brabant, who became a mother by him without waiting till she had become his wife. But the case was not an ordinary one. She was of his own class. He had solemnly affianced himself to her, and he would have married her but for a base stratagem of which they were the victims. His relations, unwilling that he should fulfil his promises, wrote to him at Rome, where he was pushing his fortune, that Margaret was dead. In a fit of despair, and perhaps of remorse, he took religious vows, and raised up an impassable barrier between them. On his return to Holland and discovery of the cheat, he and Margaret, without living as husband and wife, still did their duty by their offspring. They lived till Gerard Gerardi, or Desiderius Erasmus (as he called himself by a kind of classical pun on his Dutch names), was about fourteen years old, and left him some means, which his guardians administered with base dishonesty. Few great men have had such a constant struggle with adverse fortune—beginning, one may say, at the cradle—as this great Restorer of Letters, Conservative Reformer, and First Scholar of a memorable age.

He was born at Rotterdam, either in 1465 or 1467—we ourselves incline to accept the former date,—and the prosperous sea-port still cherishes in its market-place the brazen seventeenth-century statue of him, which looks so quaint in its cap and gown among fruit-stalls and cabbage-stalls and barges gliding along green canals. A delicate and quiet boy with yellow hair and blue eyes, he must have been a pretty sight on his way to school at Gouda—as a chorister in the cathedral of Utrecht—as a youthful student at Deventer. He loved his studies early, barbarous as were the books then in use; and his weak health tended to keep him attached to them, and withdrawn from the noise and convivialities of a jolly, but rough and uncultivated people. Nature had made him a man of letters; circumstances compelled him to become, sorely against his will—first a monk, and then a priest. The author of *Tristram Shandy* was not more unlike Mr. Stiggins, the author of *Peter Plymley's Letters* was not more unlike Mr. Chadband, than Erasmus was unlike the average friar, monk, or priest of that day. His constitution was peculiarly unfitted for the monastic life, either in its grave or gay aspects, to begin with. He required to eat frequently in small quantities, and could not bear an alternation of fasting with feasting. He had a particular disrelish for fish. He only slept well in the early part of the night, and if he was once disturbed could not compose himself again for hours. His natural piety was strong, or certainly not deficient, but ceremonies bored and wearied him; while the heavy feeds and “prolix compotations,” as he calls them, with which the inhabitants of monasteries

refreshed themselves after the routine of their life, were equally little to his taste. What he mainly liked was study, and a quiet chat (well out of draughts) over a sober cup of burgundy with men of wit and scholarship. However, what with the bullying of his guardians and of the monks of Stein near Gouda, where he went on probation, and spent his time in study, he was induced to enter the order of Augustinian Canons. He was afterwards ordained priest by the Bishop of Utrecht. Through life, he continued to attack in all his books the custom of coercing young people into religious houses. He ceased to wear the habit of his own order, after some years; and when he became distinguished, he always preferred a salary from any potentate to church preferment of the same value. In short, he was a kind of ecclesiastic *unattached*; and without repudiating his cloth, preferred the life and reputation of a scholar. But this good came from his ecclesiastical training and position,—that he spoke with authority when lashing ecclesiastical abuses, and that he was led to apply his talents for learning to a new and sensible theology—bearing such fruits as his famous edition of the Greek New Testament—and the influence of which has been felt in Europe ever since.

At Stein Erasmus remained for some time, hating the place, and consoling himself with literature. He knew his Terence and Horace by heart very early; and early acquired the mastery of a Latin quite unlike the imitative classical purism of the southern scholars, but free, vigorous, and graphic. He got away from Stein at last, under the protection of a Bishop of Cambray, who, having an eye on a cardinal's hat, wanted a good Latinist to take to Rome with him as secretary. But the scheme came to nothing, and the bishop advised Erasmus to go to Paris and study at the University, promising him a stipend, which was badly paid or not paid at all. This was his first experience of patronage—one of the man of learning's most constant but often most dismal and uncertain resources at that time. He lived in Montagu College at Paris, faring miserably, eating musty eggs, drinking bad water, and sleeping in a vile atmosphere. Here he seems to have made the acquaintance of his earliest English patron and friend, William Blount fourth Lord Montjoy, who settled a pension of a hundred crowns on him, and who suggested to him his first visit to this country in 1498. The previous year he had been in the Low Countries, at the castle of another great friend, Ann, Marchioness of Vere or Weer. England gave him at once a whole little band of friends: Thomas More, Colet dean of St. Paul's, Grocyn, one of the first men who introduced Greek at Oxford, Linacre, and so on. He lived a good deal at Oxford during this visit, and studied hard at Greek, of which he knew very little before he was thirty, and which he learned entirely by his own industry. The wanderings he went through all this time are wonderful to contemplate. We find him at Oxford, London, Paris, Orleans, Tournay, driven from one place by plague, from another by poverty, journeying always on miserable Rosinantes, which



broke down with him in the winter's mud sometimes; and in perpetual fear of being robbed, though often hardly worth robbing. Once, he tells a correspondent how, when his screw broke down with him, he made a vow to St. Paul that if he helped him out of this scrape, he would write a commentary on his Epistle to the Romans. Another time, he hired a horse at Amiens, to go to Paris in company with an Englishman, and soon found that the man from whom he had hired, and who went with them, meant to rob them on the first opportunity. The poor scholar had to watch every movement of the rascal, and lay awake in the double-bedded room where they passed the night, till near daylight, when he roused up the house, and, descending, found the rascal's horse ready saddled to have carried him off if his plan had succeeded. This was one of the ordinary adventures of that rough time. When Erasmus quitted England at the close of the 1498 visit, the Custom House at Dover seized twenty pounds he had with him—the exportation of coined money having been forbidden by Henry VII. He speaks of this disaster as “a shipwreck;” and to a poor fellow in his position, who, when he got a little money, bought first Greek books and then clothes, a shipwreck it was. On such occasions, there was nothing for it but downright sturdy begging from his patrons and friends. There is a letter of his from Orleans in 1500 to one Jacobus Battus, a faithful brother-scholar, and henchman, in which he fairly cudgels him into pressing the Lady Weer for pecuniary help. “You must excuse my modesty to her,” says he, “in amiable words, since my disposition won't suffer me to open my neediness to her myself. You must tell her that I am in the greatest poverty from the expense of this Orleans flight. . . . Italy is the fittest place for a man to take the title of doctor; and Italy cannot be visited by a delicate man without a good sum of money, especially if his literary reputation makes it impossible for him to live in a shabby style. Show her how much more honour I am likely to bring by my literature to her, than those other theologians whom she feeds. For they preach mere commonplaces, I write what will live for ever. They, trifling in an illiterate way, are heard in a church, here and there; my books will be read by Latins, by Greeks, by every nation in the whole world. There are plenty of unlearned theologians everywhere, but the like of me is only found in the course of many ages—unless” (he breaks off) “you object to lying a little bit in the cause of a friend!” Through all this comic braggadocio—the evidence of an inherent cheerfulness which misery might damp but never crushed—we see a proud self-confidence and courage which was part of the man's greatness. He was now not only studying Greek, and preparing for his edition of St. Jerome, but he was bringing out the earliest impression of his *Adagia*—that famous collection of proverbs, which first fully revealed to Europe the superiority of his learning and genius. The form of this book (which occupies a folio to itself in the great Leyden edition of his *Opera Omnia*) is such as to give the freest play to his talent and reading. He takes up any proverb—*Quot homines, tot sententiae*;



*Quid cani et balneo?*—or whatever else it may be; explains its meaning and significance with ample illustration from the whole classical literature, and then, if in the humour, makes it the text for some pleasant little disquisition on the applications which may be made of it to his own time. Accordingly, much of his most important teaching occurs in the *Adagia*. On *Dulce bellum inexpertis*, for instance, he has as pretty a little plea against war, both from the Christian and common-sense points of view, as ever was made by a public writer. All the satire and all the reasoning of modern times is anticipated in it. For Erasmus was, above all, the man who did most to supersede the old feudal way of looking at things, whether as matters of argument or sentiment, and to substitute for it the peculiar modern spirit,—utilitarian, practical, tolerant, and business-like. He is the bridge which connects the classical mind—christianized in the process—with the mind of the nineteenth century; and is thus, at once, a Christian Horace, and a Thackeray or Sydney Smith of Henry VIII.'s time, with profound erudition into the bargain. Apart, however, from its sense and satire, its ridicule of tyrants, fanatics, and fools, the *Adagia* has an historical value. Erasmus has scattered up and down it curious little personal reminiscences, and biographical sketches of his contemporaries; notices of Rodolphus Agricola, of Wolsey, of James IV. of Scotland (to whose natural son he was tutor when in Italy), of the Aldi, the famous printers of Venice, of the Frobens, the famous printers of Basle. There is a little sketch of the Dutch character under *Auris Batava*, which has an historical value, and is one of many passages throwing light on the condition of Europe at the opening of the sixteenth century. Erasmus sometimes quizzed his Dutch countrymen, but had a sincere respect for their good nature and good sense. All his objections to them, indeed, resolved themselves into these—that they liked learning too little, and that they liked liquor too much.

The *Adagia* appeared in its earliest shape (for it was much enlarged in subsequent editions), at Paris, in 1500, and was dedicated to our countryman Lord Montjoy. Next year Erasmus issued his treatise, the *Militis Christiani Enchiridion*, a manual of Christian piety from his favourite point of view, as something practical, humane, charitable, and moderate. Loyola complained that this book chilled his devotion, and there are religious people detesting Loyola and all his sons, to whom its want of "unction" would probably be equally distasteful. But Erasmus hated all extremes, and wrote to men of sense and literature. So we find him serving the cause of reformation before the Reformation had begun, in his own honest, lively fashion, and preaching the spirit of the Gospel with a cheerful flowing wit. "Many people," he says, "count how many services they are at every day; and as if this was the chief thing, and as if they owed nothing further to Christ, they walk out of the church, and resume their former morals. . . . You are sprinkled with holy water, but what's the good of that, if you don't wash away the inner dirt from your soul? You worship the saints, and like to touch

their relics, but you despise the best things they have left behind them—the examples of their pure lives. No worship is more grateful to Mary than imitating her humility. . . . You think it a great thing to be buried in the cowl of Francis, but a dress like his will do you no good when you are dead, if your morals have been different from his when living.” . . . And so he goes on, with many an antithesis which seems easy to us *now*, but the need of which *then* was about to plunge Europe into the greatest of modern revolutions. What Erasmus contributed to the Reformation was *light* rather than *heat*, but the one was as much wanted as the other. It was an intellectual as well as a spiritual movement, and he was its chief intellect. Already the bigots had begun to suspect literature, and to preach up ignorance as a part of religion. But the answer of Erasmus was constant—that literature would prove to be religion’s best friend—and *this* was the fight of his life. The *Enchiridion* was only one of many religious treatises of his, which were translated into every language of Europe.

He made a second visit to England in 1505–6, when he was introduced to Warham, who held the archbishopric of Canterbury from 1503 to 1532, one of his firmest friends. And now he realized an early ambition, a long-cherished dream: he went to Italy, and took his doctor’s degree. Italian scholars ranked then as Italian singers do now; and though Erasmus and others on our side of the Alps were beginning to grudge this superiority, the advantages of a degree from the morning-land of learning were undeniable. Thirty years later, when a young Scotch scholar, Florence Wilson, waited on Cardinal Sadolet, the cardinal was as much astonished by his flowing and elegant Latin as if he had been harangued by his mule. It was Erasmus who first made it absurd for the men of Southern Europe to call the men of the North barbarians; though the custom seems to have lasted for some time after its absurdity was proved. He took his degree at Turin, and fixed his first residence at Bologna. A curious accident that befel him here determined him to get rid of his monastic garb. The physicians who attended plague cases were compelled to wear a white cloth from the shoulder, that people might shun them in the streets, and the dress of Erasmus was so like that of a plague physician, that some young men whom he approached too near abused and nearly stoned him. He obtained a dispensation from the use of his religious habit from Pope Julius II., which was confirmed afterwards by Leo X.; and henceforth he dressed like one of the secular clergy in the grave and sober, but not grotesque attire so familiar to us on the canvas of Holbein and Durer. He lived for some time at Venice, where Aldus Manutius brought out for him a second edition of the *Adagia*, and introduced him to the eminent scholars and friends of scholars of the city. He resided also at Padua and Sienna, and was at Rome in March, 1508. The cardinals were kind, and liberal offers were made to induce him to fix his permanent residence in Italy. But though always glad of help, he had a dread of anything like permanent dependence and restraint. Besides,

about 1509, when Henry VIII. came to the throne, his English friends were anxious that he should once more try his luck here. He crossed the Rhatian Alps, came north by the Rhine, looked in upon his friends in the Low Countries, and reached London—going first to Blackfriars Monastery, and then to the house of Sir Thomas More, at Chelsea. He had beguiled the long journey—much of it, as usual, performed on horseback—by meditating his famous satire, the *Encomium Morie*, or *Praise of Folly*, which he wrote in a few days after his arrival. Folly, in this ironical piece, makes a long speech to prove her importance in the system of life, by showing how great her power is, and how insipid the world would be without the seasoning which she supplies. “Don’t you see,” she says, “that those who apply themselves to the study of philosophy, or to arduous business, get old in their very youth; whereas the fool is fat, neat, and comfortable, and will never feel any inconvenience of old age, unless the contagion of some wise man should spoil him?” How much, she argues, is added to human enjoyment by conceit, thoughtlessness, and the scores of other forms of folly! And she goes on to enumerate many a specimen of it,—national bragging, and pride, like that of the Italians in their superior civilization, of the French in their fine manners, of the Scotch in ancient birth and dialectics; pompous funerals; the excesses of monkery; the crassness of the prevailing superstitions. Of course, these last-mentioned evils are ridiculed with a peculiar gusto and liveliness. Folly admits that it would be perhaps best to pass over the theologians in silence, “as a race of men wonderfully supercilious and irritable,” and who would probably attack her with six hundred propositions, and force her to retreat under pain of being declared “a heretic,”—“for with that thunderbolt,” adds she, “they are in the habit of terrifying those whom they do not like.” But she cannot resist a playful exposure of their intolerable pedantries and prolixities, their discussions on abstruse points, such as “what would Peter have consecrated if he had consecrated at the time that Christ was on the cross?”—their “notions,” “relations,” “formalities,” “quiddities,”—and scholastic questions which the apostles themselves could hardly have understood without a fresh inspiration. The apostles, Folly goes on, making herself the mouthpiece of Erasmus’s wisdom, baptized; but they never taught anywhere what was the “formal, material, efficient and final cause” of baptism. They adored, but in the spirit—and not a little conventional image of Christ drawn on a wall. They exhort to good works, but they do not distinguish between the *opus operans* and the *opus operatum*. It would be a good thing if all the Scotists and Occamists and Albertists were sent to fight against the Turks and Saracens instead of waging a useless war amongst themselves. And so the literary reformer’s war in the cause of a rational evangelical Christianity goes on. Satire was never applied to higher purposes, or with more important results. It is of a pleasant kind, too, the satire of Erasmus—a wholesome vinegar from a good grape. There is nothing ferocious about it, for he was essentially genial and humane; and hence

there was less inconsistency in his refusing to act with the thorough-going assailants of abuses than there would have been if he had been a harsher and severer type of man. His aim was to reform the Church *from within*, and to reform it from the point of view of a humanist or lover of letters, rather than from that of a preacher.

At this time Erasmus remained in England for three or four years pretty continuously, and professed Divinity and Greek at Cambridge. We find him grumbling at the Cambridge beer, and asking his correspondent to send him some wine, which must on no account be sweet, the gout being now looming in the future we suppose. There was frequently plague flying about; living was expensive, and there was little money to be made by his lectures. Archbishop Warham was still kind; his friendship with More, Colet, and others of our nation remained unbroken; and he laboured at his *Greek Testament* and *Jerome*, under circumstances about as favourable as he had anywhere hitherto found them. Still England did not seem likely to furnish him a permanent provision, though he had a pension which he had taken instead of a benefice from the Primate; and the prices of everything were rising in the prospect of war. The scholar therefore prepared to move his tent, and in the summer of 1514 went off to the Low Countries, which had now come under the dominion of the House of Hapsburg. The first edition of his *Greek Testament* was soon making its way with the applause of the learned and liberal, but to the great disgust of many a bigot. Leo the Tenth, however, in two Papal briefs, approved Erasmus's labours, and this high sanction was of great service to him in the stormy times which followed. For the Reformation was now beginning to pass from the region of intellect into the region of action; from thought into deed; from literature into politics. The curtain had risen for the Lutheran tragedy, as it was the fashion to call it; and Erasmus, who had looked forward to an easy and lettered old age, soon began to find that his last years were to be as troubled as his early ones. Charles the Fifth made him a councillor, and endowed him with a salary. As far as fame is concerned, he had his heart's content of it. His editions of fathers and classics, his occasional treatises, his delightful *Colloquia* and admirable *Ciceronianus*, were received with the applause and wonder of Europe. He was called the "Cicero of Germany," the "Champion of Good Letters," and by a score of other fine names. Invitations to different countries poured in on him, and so strong was the bond of unity created by a common language and literature in Europe, that a man like Erasmus might feel himself as much at home in Rome as in London, in Friburg as in Louvain. But now began a new series of vexations. In the great struggle which had commenced, both parties claimed him for their own; the Lutherans as an enemy of abuses, the orthodox as a member of the church. Erasmus, however, had in his heart of hearts complete sympathy with neither, though he had some sympathy with both. He wished to improve the church, but to improve it on the existing basis, and all tumult and schism was utterly hateful to his nature. He was a

moderate man, a bookish man, a humourist. And while we readily admit that his was not the kind of stuff of which heroes and martyrs are made, let us be careful to insist that it was right good and useful stuff notwithstanding. He was not secretly a Lutheran pretending to be orthodox, any more than he was secretly a bigot, pretending to be a reformer. He honestly told both parties from the beginning that he held a view of his own, independent of them, and that he should continue to serve the cause of Christianity and good letters (it was one and the same cause in *his eyes*) in his own way. For instance, we have him writing to Wolsey, from Antwerp, in May, 1518, that his great aim has been to restore literature; that literature is not responsible for everything that Luther and his followers may do; that he knows little of Luther's writings, though he hears nothing but good of his life; that the violence of the Lutherans may injure literature by provoking a reaction; and that his advice to Eobanus Hessus, and Ulric Hutten, and Beatus, and the rest of them, always was, to be temperate and reasonable, and not to overload their cause with unnecessary materials of discord. But Erasmus did not hold one language to Wolsey, and another language to Luther. When Luther wrote to him from Wittenberg, in March, 1519, his answer was in the same familiar key. "The people here," he says, "persist in calling me the standard-bearer of your party; and they look upon your books as giving them a handle for oppressing sound literature in the interests of the majesty of theology, which they value much more highly than they do Christ. I have told them that you are quite unknown to me, and that I have not even read your books." And then follows what was the cream of his counsel to Luther and his friends always. "As for myself, I reserve myself entire, that I may do the more good to the sound letters reviving amongst us. And it seems to me that more good may be done by civil modesty than by violence. So Christ brought the world under his dominion. So Paul abrogated the Judaic law. It is better worth while to call out against those who abuse the authority of the pontiffs, than against the pontiffs themselves. Schools are not so much to be treated with contempt, as recalled to more sober studies. In regard to things too deeply implanted to be torn out, they ought to be dealt with by strong arguments rather than asseverations." All this was at least consistent and above-board. If it was "trimming," it was the honest trimming of a man who did not wish to capsize the common Christian boat. An Erasmusian Reformation, purging the Church gradually without breaking its unity—instead of the actual Reformation, with its divisions, wars, and lasting damage to the unity of Germany in particular—may have been impossible. Many are probably glad that things took the course they did, instead. But, at least, it was an honest dream as far as Erasmus was concerned; and if the condition of ecclesiastical Europe, Papal or Protestant, is everywhere purer now, he must be credited with a noble share in the work. With regard to the question of vulgar temporal interests, there were no considerations of that sort which could

tempt Erasmus to one side more than the other. He was sure of a European audience, whether he wrote from Wittenberg or from Louvain. There were Protestant princes in Germany as ready to give him the little he needed as Charles V. himself; and he might have died in his bed as quietly as Luther or Melancthon.

The head-quarters of Erasmus during the earlier years of the Reformation—from 1514, indeed, to 1522—were at Louvain—an ancient seat of the civilization of the Netherlands, much affected by theologians. He might move about, indeed, when he wanted a little recreation, among other old cities of the Netherlands, Mechlin, or Brussels, or Antwerp;—cities, in the antique parts of which, with their lofty gables, and spires, and rich ornamentation, faded but beautiful, it is so easy still to fancy one's meeting the grave, worn face, lightened by airiest humour, of the dark-robed scholar. But Louvain was his head-quarters, and he led the old life there—working like a day-labourer at fathers and classics; moistening his simple meals with a little Burgundy, chiefly of the Beaune kind; grumbling at bigots, and potentates not sufficiently awake to the claims of literature; and maintaining a voluminous correspondence with all parts of Europe. We find him in 1519 thanking a good abbot who had sent him a haunch of venison and a copy of Cyprian. But there were theologians of a different stamp—men stingy with their venison and ignorant of Cyprian—who treated him in quite another way. While the Lutherans were grumbling that Erasmus only thought of himself, the bigots were furious with him as the cause of all the Lutheran mischief. He was abused in the pulpits of Louvain itself by preachers and professors, who, as he playfully observes, had nothing of the theologian about them but the purple cap. "One had better cultivate a garden than literature!" he exclaims, once, in a despondent mood. The ignorance of these children of darkness was prodigious. Many of them held, not in the Netherlands only, but in England and everywhere else, that there was something impious in editing the New Testament or Jerome at all. They thought that by reverting to early MSS., Erasmus was departing from the sacred text, instead of going nearer to what the sacred text actually was when delivered. A new reading was a blasphemy in their eyes. And they often declaimed against him, without reading what he had written or even being able to read it. One worthy thought that St. Paul had written to the Corinthians in Hebrew. Another translated a passage in which we are told to "shun" heretics, as a command to "kill" them. All this sort of men laid the blame of Lutheranism on the revival of the ancient literature; and made the most pious resolutions (which they faithfully kept) to have nothing to do with Greek! The attitude of such men towards Erasmus was one of base hate and envy; and these passions displayed themselves in the wildest ways. Burly Dominicans and greasy Carmelites were heard raging against him in waggons and canal-boats, to mobs and markets. "Erasmus laid the egg," was one of their sayings, "and Luther hatched it." "It is from Erasmus that Luther has sucked



his venom." The storm-tossed Ulysses of letters, as he called himself, began to grow tired of Louvain. In 1518 he had paid his farewell visit to England, and had been received with courtesy by Henry VIII. and Wolsey. He resolved, about 1522, to settle at Basle, where he had several times been on business, and where the printing-house of his friend and printer, Froben, was beginning to acquire a celebrity like that of the Aldi at Venice. To Froben's son he dedicated his *Colloquia*, the publication of which belongs to this period. No other work of his now finds a numerous body of readers; but the *Colloquia* have become classical, and are issued, in company with Horace and Lucian, from the presses of Tauchnitz. They may be old-fashioned, but they are not obsolete. Admirable as dialogues by their life-like vivacity and wit, they are even more attractive as pictures of the time. The priest, the monk, the scholar, the pilgrim of the opening of the sixteenth century, are brought before us; and we see the old mediæval and Catholic society of Europe in the last shapes which it assumed before passing away for ever. The satire of these colloquies was another source of offence, not to the bigots only, but to all the strait-laced among the orthodox. The Reformation was now, they thought, passing beyond the stage of jokes. Luther had defied the Pope, and burnt his bull; and it was time for everybody who respected the Holy See to abstain from ridiculing the abuses which were made the pretexts for such deeds. But Erasmus would not accept this point of view. He was a good Catholic, and he did not mean to break from the Pope. But that was no reason why he should shut his mouth about scandals, the exposure of which might urge the authorities to reforms. To break with the authorities was to lose the advantages of the Catholic system, and to encourage the violence of those so-called Lutherans, whose extravagances annoyed Luther, and wounded Melancthon. Like Cicero, he remained with men whose defects he saw, for fear of worse. Like Burke, he did not admit that he had ceased to be a reformer, because he refused to join a revolution. Besides, he was now far on, over the shady side of fifty, and plagued by the stone. The young Germans who rallied tumultuously under Luther were of a different generation, and a different training. Something of the wildness of the old forest life belonged to them, and was seen in their Ulric Hutten, with his ready sword, big goblet, and rattling dice-box. Erasmus had been bred amidst the ancient civilization, at once aristocratic and commercial, of the Netherlands. He had seen the refinement of Italy, and of those English scholars who were second—if second—to the Italian scholars alone. A certain aristocracy of scholarship made him shrink from the noisy and often half-educated plebeians, whose devotion to the Gospel was mixed up with an impatience of social distinctions and superior culture. Yet whether he liked them or not he had forwarded their cause, as Voltaire afterwards did that of many a Jacobin whom he would have classed with the *canaille*.



*Sic sedebat*, in the house of Froben at Basle, or strolled in his garden, Desiderius Erasmus, from 1522 to 1529, while the course of events flowed by him irresistible as the passing Rhine. It was a curious position, for, as he justly says, *utrinque lapidabatur*, he was stoned on both sides. But he stoned both sides, too, the fine old epigrammatist, whose sling never wanted a pebble any more than the bed of the Ilissus in summer time. The Elector Frederick having asked him his opinion of the strife, he said that Luther had done two dangerous things: "He had attacked the Pope's crown and the monks' bellies." He explained his dislike of fish by saying that he had "a Lutheran stomach." When the great Reformer took a wife, he remarked that, "The tragedy like a comedy had ended in a wedding." But to the monkish cry that Antichrist would spring, according to ancient prophecies, from a monk and a nun, "Then surely," said he, "he must have often appeared already!" "Henkel," he observed "has refused a bishoprick, but as times go, it is better to be a hog-driver than a hog." *Bon-mots* like these were the Attic salt with which he seasoned the meat of controversy; and it was characteristic of his essential good nature that they were far more often genial than cynical. Indeed, only his studies saved his later years from being very unhappy. The Lutherans grew more and more angry with him, and Hutten assailed him with fury. Successive Popes and many sovereigns pressed him to write against Luther, but he never did what they wanted; for his dispute with Luther on the Freedom of the Will was not the kind of dispute which they wished to see between them. His old friends, like More and Montjoy, were generally good Catholics, and wondered that he did not exert himself in the cause. Of his younger friends, many were angry with him for precisely the opposite reason. But most of those whom he had longest loved passed away before him—Colet, Ammonius, Warham, Montjoy, and More himself, the likeliest to him in genius of them all. It was from Basle that Erasmus sent Holbein to More, who received him kindly at his house at Chelsea, where he painted the whole family in one group, which he brought to Erasmus in Switzerland, in 1529. "I cannot describe to you"—writes Erasmus that year, from Friburg, to Margaret Roper, Sir Thomas's daughter—"what pleasure I felt when the painter Holbein showed me the entire family, so admirably expressed that I could hardly have seen them better if I had been in their midst. I am often in the habit of wishing that once again, before my last day, I could behold that most dear company to which I owe a great part of whatever fortune or glory I have, and owe it to none more willingly. The ingenious hand of the painter has fulfilled no small part of this. I recognized all, but none more readily than you; seeming to see through its beautiful dwelling the still more beautiful soul shining. . . . Commend me to that most admirable matron your mother. I kissed her image, since I could not be with herself." But the kind-hearted man never saw any of the Mores again; and must have felt one of the bitterest pangs of his lonely old age when he heard of the manner

of Sir Thomas More's death. The public calamities of Europe were private calamities to him. The library of his friend Sadolet was destroyed in the sack of Rome. The wars, the executions of heretics, the riots in cities, seemed to portend a new barbarism, an extinction of the light of which he had been one of the chief bringers. He protested frequently, at last, that he was quite ready to depart from this life, and did not care though the glory he had acquired should pass away before him.

Erasmus did not spend his whole remaining time at Basle. When the Reformation established itself there, he moved to Friburg, where he stayed for some years. In 1536, he returned to Basle, but only to die. He was on his way to the Low Countries, and put up at the house of Froben, still working to the last. An attack of dysentery brought him to the verge of death in summer, and he predicted the very day of his dissolution. But neither his intellect, patience, nor peculiar vivacity ever failed him. A few days before he died, when his three friends, Froben, Amberbach, and Episcopius, entered his room, he compared them to the three friends of Job, and asked why their garments were not rent, and their heads sprinkled with ashes? He retained his reason to the latest moment, praying to Christ, and to Christ only, and passed away about midnight on the 11th July. He had saved some money, in spite of his poverty and his liberality to others, and left it to form a fund for poor old men, poor scholars, and portionless girls. Great crowds came to see his body. He was carried to his grave in the ancient Cathedral, on the shoulders of students, and laid in the presence of a large and honourable company near the steps leading to the choir, to rest after his labours beside the river which flows away to his native land.

---

e  
d  
n  
f  
t  
e  
  
e  
d  
s  
ll  
f  
t  
A  
d  
f  
d  
o  
h  
y  
d  
o  
d  
g  
o